Power, Distance, and Stereotyping Between Colonizer and Colonized and Men and Women in A Passage to India

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Abstract

The study that follows is based on the novel A Passage to India by E.M . Forster and the purpose of this study is to demonstrate how physical distance, social distance, and emotional distance in the novel fuel the power dichotomy between the British Colonizers and the Indian Colonized, (synonymous in this discussion with the terms 'the West' and 'the East', respectively), and male and female characters. The second purpose of this study is to show how distance necessitates the reliance upon stereotypes as a means of understanding people and places in the novel.

My method for conducting this study is based on my interpretation of the novel and, although supported by the theoretical perspectives presented in Narrative theory, Postcolonial theory, and Feminist theory, it is my own understanding of how these theoretical perspectives fit into the plot of the text that serves as the starting point for this discussion. I have examined A Passage to India within its cultural, political, social, and historical context, while performing a close reading, and subsequent close interpretation, of the primary text. I base my analysis on direct quotations from A Passage to India to support my claims.

The results of this study indicated that distance does play a key role in the novel in fueling the power dichotomy between the British Colonizers and male and female characters, while also perpetuating the reliance upon stereotypes in the novel.

Dedications

I would like to dedicate this MA thesis to my husband, Nils, who patiently supported me throughout the writing process; my children, Oliver and Alexander, whose timely arrival in the middle of my masters program enabled me to gain some perspective on what I was writing; my mother, Mollie, for tirelessly proof-reading my introduction; my father, Gary, for instilling me with a love for literature; and my mother and father-in-law, Marit and Kjell for helping out with the kids so that I could finish writing this thesis.

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Chapter One

Introduction

"The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth […] persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic. Belief in myths allows the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought" (John F. Kennedy). There are many different interpretations of what myth is and what function it serves. Kennedy's acute description of the myth as "persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic" underlines the myth's resilience and ability to withstand the test of time, in addition to its adaptability and transferability into diverse cultural, ethnic, and geographic settings. Different cultures may rely on different versions of the same myths, but the fact remains that the resemblance of these myths to one another is unmistakable. For example, the Babylonian myth of Gilgamesh and the Greek myth of Achilles resemble each other greatly in that they both focus on flawed heroes who are descendents of mortals and immortals. Similarly, nearly every culture has its own version of a creation story, or myth, which they use as a basis to explain their origins. However, there are several different types of myth, one of the more contemporary forms being the stereotype. Myth and stereotype are equally durable, but the stereotype is arguably a more powerful construction than the myth. Semantically, 'myth' can only be applied to infer a noun, whereas 'stereotype' is both verb and noun. Both terms, in noun form, are abstract, but the application of the verb form of 'stereotype' lends more concreteness to it and, thus, more power. Stereotypes and the ability to stereotype others are both dependent on the existence of power hierarchies, which in turn are dependent on various types of distance between the subject being stereotyped and the one who is passing judgment.. In this case, distance is defined as the physical and attitudinal space between people, places, and communities. The types of distance most relevant to this thesis include social distance,

physical distance, emotional distance, and narrative distance, all of which will be further defined in this introduction. In the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes, distance plays a key role. The main questions I will discuss in this thesis are: In the novel A Passage to India, by E.M. Forster, how does distance serve as the enabling factor that fuels the power dichotomy between the British colonizers and the Indian Colonized, (synonymous in this discussion with the terms 'the West' and 'the East', respectively), and male and female characters? Additionally, how does distance necessitate the reliance upon stereotypes as a means of understanding people and places in the novel?

A Passage to India, written by London-born E.M. Forster and first published in 1924, relates the intricacies of life in imperial pre-WWII India. Forster draws on several first-hand experiences to create the plot and characters of A Passage to India, such as two trips he took to India in the early nineteen-hundreds (one prior to writing A Passage to India and one during its composition), his own distaste for nationalism, and his preference of interpersonal relationships over political agenda (*Introduction to A Passage to India*). The result is a novel that encapsulates Forster's impressions of the people, places, things, and ideas that comprised a tumultuous time in India's history prior to its emancipation after WWII. In this novel, Forster depicts a society riddled with problems created by the social and physical distances that are in place. These distances fuel the power dichotomy between the Indians and the British Anglo-Indians, the male characters and the female characters, and the East and West. Distance also leads to the reliance upon stereotypes as a means of understanding the people and places the characters encounter in the novel.

Although well received upon publication in 1924, A Passage to India was initially somewhat overshadowed by the publication of James Joyce's Ulysses and T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land in 1922 and Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway in 1925— all of which were and still are highly acclaimed. Major critical studies done on A Passage to India seem to stem

mainly from Modernist studies, Postcolonial studies, and Feminist studies. The novel's relevance to Modernism is apparent in its status as an inter-war novel and can also been seen in, among other things, the elements of uncertainty, problematization, questioning of norms, and questioning of authority throughout the text. Although these are themes that I discuss throughout this thesis, I have chosen to focus my discussion on how they pertain to Postcolonial studies and Feminist studies. In terms of the novel's relevance to Postcolonial studies, it is a striking example of a canonical Postcolonial text that pre-empts the collapse of British imperialism in India. This is especially impressive in light of the fact that it was published 23 years before the actual fall of the British Indian Empire. The relevance of the novel in the area of Feminist criticism can be seen in the novel's presentation of women from various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds within the male-dominated context of imperialism. Although my focus is on Postcolonial studies and Feminist studies, there are parallels between my discussion in this thesis and a fairly recent Modernist study of A Passage to India by Paul Armstrong entitled Play and the Politics of Reading: The Social Uses of Modernist Form. I agree with Armstrong's assertion that A Passage to India is "[a] work of much greater epistemological complexity than its seemingly conventional narrative forms suggests" (Armstrong 128). However, unlike Armstrong, I extend this idea into a discussion of the narrative techniques rooted in Narrative theory that Forster employs in order to create distance between people and places within the novel, manipulate perspective, and shape characterization. My discussion that follows in this thesis is, in part, an extension of a point that Armstrong makes, that is similar to one of my own points, when he states that A Passage to India "invokes the ideal of nonreified, reciprocal knowledge of other people and cultures only to show that interpretation invariably requires distancing, objectifying prejudgments" (Armstrong 128). In my own discussion, I focus on how different types of distance in the novel lead to and necessitate the reliance upon stereotypes (or what Armstrong

calls “distancing, objectifying prejudgments”). Armstrong appropriates the term “double turn” from Lionel Trilling, which Trilling uses as a means to discuss Forster’s repeated negation and/ or questioning of cultural norms (Trilling 16- 17). This idea of double turns in A Passage to India is similar to what I call “problematization” in my discussion of the novel. Armstrong uses the term double turns in connection with his discussion of how Forster’s “ideal of community as a principle of justice is […] both rejected and affirmed” (Armstrong 142). My own use of the term problematization is applied to several different examples of Forster, as the implied author acting through the narrator, inviting the reader to question norms throughout the novel, and is thus used to address a wider array of themes than Armstrong addresses in his discussion. One area where I disagree with Armstrong is on the matter of “truth”. Armstrong states that “[c]onsistent with its implication that an ideal state of knowledge can be approached but only indirectly, through negation, *A Passage to India* affirms both the discoverability of “truth” and the necessity of endless interpretation” (Armstrong 135). Although I agree with Armstrong that A Passage to India encourages an awareness of interpretive multiplicity based on differing perspectives, I do not believe that the novel “affirms the discoverability of truth” because there is no one truth to be discovered in the novel. In support of his claim, Armstrong cites the example of Adela’s confusion in the Marabar Caves, which results in her false accusation of assault on the part of Aziz, yet I see the same example as relevant in the support of my own claim that there is no single truth in the novel— only half-truths at best. The half-truth, or partial truth, of what happened in the caves is that Aziz did not assault Adela. The reader knows this for a fact because the narrator follows Aziz the whole time he is in the caves, while simultaneously taking leave of Adela during the period when she claims to have been attacked by Aziz. Thus the reader knows that Aziz is truly innocent of committing the crime against Adela. However, since neither the narrator nor the reader know what actually did happen to Adela due to gaps in the

narrative, the truth about what actually took place in the caves with regard to Adela is impossible to discover.

Given its historical orientation, A Passage to India lends itself nicely to the examination of how distance, obtained through the use and perpetuation of stereotypes, enables the power dichotomy between the Colonizer and the Colonized and male and female characters for three main reasons: First, A Passage to India was written in the first quarter of the twentieth century between WWI and WWII when the system of European global political dominance began to disintegrate, lending the novel an air of simultaneous fragmentation, disillusionment, and hope, which is characteristic of the period in which it was written. While fragmentation and disillusionment are prevalent throughout the novel and can be seen through several characters, Forster introduces few characters in A Passage to India who embody and represent the idea of hope. Two examples of such characters are Mrs Moore and Fielding. In this imbalance between fragmentation and disillusionment versus hope, Forster problematizes the feasibility of hope and highlights the improbability of progression and mutual understanding between different people and countries in the type of setting that he presents in the novel.

Second, the interwar period serves as an illuminating backdrop for the composition and setting of the novel in that it highlights the relationship between the Colonizer, Great Britain, and the Colonized, India. Also relevant is the fact that the interwar period marks a shift in the political climate in India in regards to relations with Great Britain: India's mainstream political leaders were initially very supportive of Great Britain at the outset of WWI. However, the resulting human suffering in post-WWI India caused by high wartime death tolls, inflation, heavy taxation, and the war's impediment on Indian business and trade led to a shift in public sentiment (Stein). This subsequent shift in public sentiment in India is

reflected in A Passage to India through the theme of the dominant West and the submissive (albeit disgruntled) East.

Third, although British women over the age of 30 were granted voting rights in 1918, at the end of WWI, women were not granted full voting rights on equal par with their male counterparts until 1928 when the Representation of the People Act was passed (Smith). Furthermore, A Passage to India, published in 1924, arrived between these two historical landmarks when much focus and attention was on women's rights. It is interesting that the female characters in the novel are marginalized in that that the only roles they are permitted to play out are those of wives, fiancées, mothers, and mistresses. Thus, the female characters, dominated by their male counterparts, are limited by their gender and the only tool they have available to them in order to gain and exercise power is via their relationships with male characters.

The theoretic basis for this thesis is taken from the standpoint that novels are mimetic entities that reflect the world as it was, could have been, should have been, is, will be, could be, or should be. Essential to my analysis of A Passage to India is the New Critical method of close reading where I have read and re-read the novel paying close attention to form, language, and syntax, in addition to paying attention to patterns on a textual and sub-textual level. However, this is not to say that I adhere to the other beliefs of the New Critics in that meaning can be derived from the texts as they stand alone. Rather, I side more with the New Historicists in my belief that the meaning of a text is based on the investigation and examination of the text within its cultural, political, social, and historical context. Specifically, I recognize and emphasize the importance of Forster's own experiences as a British man in India in the early nineteen-hundreds and how this has helped to shape A Passage to India. I draw on a combination Postcolonial theory and Feminist theory, both of

which are types of Reader Response theory and support the idea that meaning changes from reader to reader.

Postcolonial theory is central to my discussion and analysis of A Passage to India: "Post-colonialism (or often postcolonialism) deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies" (Ashcroft 168). Postcolonial theory is a complex construction which is only briefly introduced at this point. Specifically, in this thesis I will focus on the postcolonial concepts of marginalization, objectification, and oppression and I agree with the assertion made within Postcolonial theory that novels are not merely self-referential fictional entities but, rather, are important vehicles in terms of shaping cultural identities. Chapter two of this thesis, which focuses on the relationship between the British Colonizers and the Indian Colonized, is supported theoretically by the ideas of Postcolonial theorists Edward Said and Homi Bhabha about the power-play between the East and the West.

Feminist theory is also central to my discussion and analysis of A Passage to India. Feminist theory is based on Feminism and is concerned with the examination of relationships and gender inequality. Key concepts of Feminist theory that I will utilize in this thesis are those of power hierarchies, suppression, marginalization, stereotyping, and patriarchy. Chapter three of this thesis, which focuses on the relationship between male and female characters in the novel, draws its theoretical support from Feminist theorist Hélène Cixous' theory of binary oppositions relating to the connection between power constructs and gender. However, Said's ideas about Colonialism and Postcolonialism and Bhabha's ideas on engendered locations based on colonial and postcolonial constructs serve as the over-arching basis for the theoretical backbone of this entire thesis. The connection between Postcolonial theory and Feminist theory will be made explicit in chapter three. Both theoretical perspectives will be defined and expanded upon in their respective chapters.

Essential to my discussion and analysis of A Passage to India is the use of Narrative theory. Narrative theory is based on the study of narratives or stories, both written and unwritten. Of particular interest to me in this thesis is the way in which the components of narrator, implied author, narration, and characterization combine in order to create an overall impression on the reader. The manner in which I perform my close reading and close analysis of the novel necessitates my reliance on these elements of Narrative theory. Likewise, my discussion of irony and narrative distance draws on the theoretical perspectives of Narrative theory. The two main texts that I utilize in support of my argument are E.M. Forster's Aspects of the Novel and Jakob Lothe's Narrative in Fiction and Film.

The combination of Postcolonial theory, Feminist theory, and Narrative theory justifies my reliance throughout this thesis on key terms, as this helps to keep the discussion focused by emphasizing the commonalities between the three theoretical perspectives. Instead of elaborating on these theories, I will now draw the reader's attention to the key terms, which are linked to these theories.

In the presentation and definition of the key terms relevant to this thesis, the key terms are marked by bolded script in the paragraphs that follow. Many of my key terms are linked to the theoretical standpoints of Postcolonial theory, Narrative theory, and Feminist theory, which are central to this discussion. These terms not only come from these theories but also help to shape the theories that they are derived from. In some cases it is my own understanding of these terms that serves as the definition for how they are to be understood in the context of this thesis, and in other cases my own definition does not deviate from the definition of them in their respective theoretical origins. My own definitions of the key terms presented in this introduction and the "classic" definitions of them within their relevant theoretical discourses will be made explicit in this introduction. Many of my key terms are connected to one or more of these theoretical categories. Common to all three theoretical

perspectives are the terms 'perspective', 'distance', 'binary opposition', 'dehumanization', and 'gaze'.

A Passage to India presents a series of binary-oppositional dichotomic relationships, which is reminiscent of techniques employed in both Postcolonial theory and Feminist theory. The term '**binary opposition'** refers to a set of two entities that are seemingly opposite to one another in nature. Forster's presentation of binary opposition in A Passage to India is in part what makes the novel a Postcolonial text. Evidence of binary opposition can be seen in Forster's plot, characterization, and the relationships he creates between characters. However, Forster also problematizes the reliance on binaries; he constructs binaries and then seems to manipulate them in order to illustrate why and how they are flawed. The two primary binary oppositions found in A Passage to India that I will focus on in this thesis are Colonizer versus Colonized and man versus woman.

A Passage to India, set in pre- World War II India before India gained independence from Great Britain, depicts colonization and the subsequent power struggle between the Colonizer and the Colonized. Inherent in the process of colonization is the establishment of a power hierarchy between the Colonizer and the Colonized in which the Colonizer is dominant over the Colonized, thus creating the illusion that the two are polar opposites. Essential to the process of colonization is the Colonizer's establishment of distance between himself/ herself and the colonized peoples.

In A Passage to India colonization is only one of the many aspects of the relationship between the East and the West. The construction of the East and the West paved the way for the creation of stereotypes of Easterners by Westerners and vice versa and the physical, social, cultural, and emotional distance between the two parties perpetuated the reliance on stereotypes as a means of understanding one another. The terms 'the East' and 'the West' will be used interchangeably in the course of this thesis with the terms 'Colonized' and

'Colonizer', respectively. Specifically, '**the West**' and **'Colonizer**' will be used to denote Britain and the British while **'Colonized**' will be used to refer to India and the Indians depicted in the novel. The distinction between the East and West as *places* (albeit abstract socially constructed entities based on a euro-centric categorization and mapping of the world) and Colonizer and Colonized as a discussion of *people* will be made in chapter two of this thesis. References will also be made in the second chapter to particular characters in A Passage to India that represent the East and the West, and the focus will shift between how they operate as agents of the East and the West and how these "places" shape the identity of their members.

Another binary opposition presented in A Passage to India is that of male characters versus female characters. As previously mentioned, this novel was written during a time of great change in women's rights in Great Britain. Women were beginning to gain some of the same rights as men, but in many ways were still second-class citizens. The female characters, from both the East and the West, are continuously marginalized by their male counterparts. Despite this gender-based marginalization, they find ways to exert their power through the manipulation of their roles as wives, fiancées, mothers, and mistresses, highlighting yet another example of how Forster presents conventional binary relationships and then thwarts the expectations of his readers by confounding these relationships.

The binary oppositions of Colonizer versus Colonized and male versus female are just two examples of the multiple binary oppositions Forster presents in A Passage to India. Although it is tempting to think of these binary oppositions as static in nature, they are not and this is repeatedly illustrated throughout the novel.

In addition to presenting the various power dichotomies evident in the novel, an extensive analysis of how distance plays a key role in those dichotomies will follow. The gap that lies between each set of binary opposites listed above will be referred to, for all intensive

purposes, as distance. The main types of distance that will be examined are physical distance, social distance, emotional distance, and narrative distance. The word "distance" is defined in the Random House Dictionary as "the state or fact of being apart in space, as of one thing from another" and "remoteness or difference in any respect" ("Distance"). I use this term broadly in the context of this thesis in the sense that it is discussed in terms of **physical distance,** which refers to the space between concrete locations of people and/ or places; **social distance**, which denotes a difference in customs and practices and often occurs as a result of difference in race, class, religion, culture, and/ or socio-economic status; and **emotional distance**, which denotes the inability to sympathize with someone of a different race or sex. The term distance can be illusive and difficult to work with because it functions on both a concrete and an abstract level. It is concrete in terms of physical distance, which can be measured, but in the discussion of emotional distance it is more abstract. Furthermore, social distance has elements of both the abstract and the concrete in that it can be observed but it cannot be measured or quantified in any way. Thus, there is a cumulative effect in the combination of the concrete and the abstract in the blended nature of distance.

The entire basis for the existence of these types of distance is **narrative distance**, which refers to the temporal, spatial, and attitudinal distance that the narrator must have from the characters in order to pass judgment on them while simultaneously 'knowing' them. Narrative distance is discussed in Narrative in Fiction and Film in terms of referring "particularly to the relationship between the narrator and the events/ characters in the narrative text" and can include elements of temporal distance (based on the retrospective nature of many narratives), spatial distance (based on the "distance between the narrative situation and the place where the (main) events unfold"), and attitudinal distance (based on the narrator's opinions of characters or situations presented in the narrative and closely linked to irony) (Lothe 35-37). In discussing narration, which Forster refers to as "the point of view

from which the story may be told" (Aspects of the Novel 85), Forster paraphrases Percy Lubbock's ideas laid out in The Craft of Fiction. Forster writes that the writer "can either describe the characters from outside, as an impartial or partial onlooker; or he can assume omniscience and describe them from within; or he can place himself in the position of one of them and affect to be in the dark as to the motives of the rest; or there are certain intermediate attitudes" (Aspects of the Novel 85-86). In other words, the author can employ a third-person narrator who may or may not be omniscient and unbiased, or the author may use an omniscient third-person narrator who has all encompassing knowledge about the characters and events in the narrative, or the author may rely on a first-person narrator who is biased and has a limited perspective and limited knowledge of other characters and events in the narrative. This way of understanding the narrator serves as a useful starting point but in some ways it is oversimplified. In more recent times, the idea of the narrator has been expanded to include the author's role in the creation of the narrator, which results in a more well-rounded presentation of what the narrator is, how it was created, and how it functions within a text: "The narrator (or the combination of narrators) is a narrative instrument that the author uses to present and develop the text, which is thus constituted by the activities and functions that the narrator performs" (Lothe 20). What is implied here, although not directly addressed, is narrative distance, or how closely a narrator is connected to the characters and events in a narrative.

In A Passage to India Forster utilizes a third-person narrator. However, this narrator does not remain entirely impartial to the characters in the narrative, nor is this narrator entirely omniscient. On the contrary, the narrator seems to be distanced from flat characters, such as Ronny Heaslop and Adela Quested, while remaining closer to round characters, such as Mrs Moore and Fielding. This distancing is another aspect of narrative distance and is presupposed by instances of irony in the novel. There are many different types of irony, (e.g.

verbal irony, stable irony, unstable irony, and dramatic irony) (Lothe 37-38)) but the type of irony most relevant to this discussion is stable irony. This is defined in Narrative in Fiction and Film as "what we have if the author (through the narrator and the shaping of the discourse) presents the reader with an assertion or a position that gives a firm basis for subverting the surface meaning" (Lothe 37). Irony is linked to attitudinal distance and, in terms of narrative distance, connotes the narrator's attitudinal distance from particular characters presented in a text, as is seen in A Passage to India.

I offer the disclaimer that, although the term distance is used broadly, it is also used narrowly in an open acknowledgement that there exist countless other types of distance (i.e. metaphoric distance, metaphysical distance, psychological distance, etc.) and that the types of distance that I argue are evident in A Passage to India are merely a small sample in the broad spectrum of the types of distance that exist.

The characters actively engaged in perpetuating the various types of distance are most often those in positions of power. Distance is an affirmation and a manifestation of that power and serves as a tool used by those in power to exercise more control over their subordinates. These individuals, communities, and nations are often depicted as powerless in nearly every capacity with their role in the power relationship having been forced upon them.

The physical, social, emotional, and narrative distances in A Passage to India result directly in the **dehumanization** of both the Colonizer and the Colonized and male and female characters. Dehumanization is defined in the Random House Dictionary as "to deprive of human qualities or attributes, divest of individuality" ("Dehumanization"). Dehumanization occurs when one experiences another as sub-human rather than a thinking, feeling, human individual. Dehumanization can be seen on a narrative level in examples where the narrator describes characters, such as Ronny, in a manner that makes them seem incapable of demonstrating human thought and emotion.

Another important concept that is key to this discussion is that of **perspective**. Perspective can be defined as a person's point of view or the way one comprehends the world around him/ her based on vantage point, prior knowledge, and the facts available at the time. Perspective has a multi-directional nature in that it can be applied to the agent initiating the looking in addition to the agent that receives the look and then looks back at the one that initiated the look in the first place. Distance is an important aspect of perspective as it influences the vantage point of the viewer. Some things become clearer to the viewer the closer he or she gets to the thing being viewed, whereas other times it is easier to see things more clearly from a distance. This pertains to abstract things, such as situations, as well as concrete things, such as people and places. In Narrative theory perspective is largely shaped by the type of narrator the author chooses to utilize. By strategically choosing one of the three types of narrators described above, the author can manipulate how much information the reader has access to. The closer the narrator is to the narrative, such as in first-person narration, the narrower the perspective and the more limited the information available to the reader. In narratives with greater narrative distance, such as those with third-person narration, the perspective is broad and the reader is allowed access to a more vast wealth of information. In A Passage to India, Forster utilizes a third-person narrator as the vehicle for presenting the narrative. As is the standard in Narrative theory, I use the pronoun 'he' in connection with the narrator, as the author of the novel is a man and there is no indication in the text that the narrator is female.

Perspective can be further broken down in terms of '**gaze'**. The word 'gaze' in itself has a positive association and connotes a sense of curiosity, wonder, and/ or awe. For example, one can gaze across the ocean, gaze at the stars in the sky, and gaze into a lover's eyes. However, within the contexts of Postcolonialism and Feminism, which are the theoretical backbone of this thesis, the term gaze is pejorative. In this construct gaze is more

akin to voyeurism, where the subject of the gaze is often unknowingly or unwillingly the victim of the viewer's stare. Inherent in this gaze is the power hierarchy between the predatorial gazer and the prey-like object of the gaze. This gaze encompasses perspective and power. The types of gaze relevant to this discussion are **imperial gaze, postcolonial gaze,** and the **male gaze.** Postcolonial gaze refers to the aftermath of colonization for both the Colonizer and the Colonized in terms of how they view each other after the Colonizers leave. In this case, gaze is multi-directional in that both the former Colonizers and the former Colonized are simultaneously viewer and viewed, as the power hierarchy dissipates in the Postcolonial period. Conversely, imperial gaze and male gaze are unidirectional gazes where the imperialist Colonizer stares at the Colonized and the males stare at the females, with the power to define their subjects. Specifically, the male gaze illustrates the power that men have over women through objectification.

Also important to this discussion is the concept of **narrative gaze** which refers to the narrator gazing or looking intently at the characters while being the one with the power to shape their portrayal through the narrator's own perspective. I believe that narrative gaze is similar to what Lothe calls "external narrative perspective" in Narrative in Fiction and Film in that it is based on the distance created between the narrative and the narrator through the existence of a third-person narrator (Lothe 41). The distance between the narrator and the subjects is what enables narrative gaze. Without sufficient distance between the narrator and the characters in the novel there is no space for gazing.

Distance leads to dehumanization and objectification through the employment of the gaze, and the result of this is the creation of stereotypes. **Stereotypes** are created when the distant, or unfamiliar, is caricatured based on a fixed set of generalizations used as a means of classification. A "stereotype" is defined in the American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition as "a generalization, usually exaggerated or oversimplified […] that is

used to describe or distinguish a group" ("stereotype"). To distinguish is to set aside or distance, and this process of setting aside or distancing oneself from the stereotyped subject is necessary to the very process of stereotyping. The issue of how and why stereotyping occurs in A Passage to India, and Forster's problematization of it, will be presented in the following chapters.

Although the Colonizers in A Passage to India distance themselves from the Colonized and establish a social hierarchy with the Colonizer in the position of power, the effects of colonization take their toll on both parties. The result is an involuntary co-dependent relationship between Colonizer and Colonized where, despite being fundamentally detached from one another, the Colonizer and Colonized are linked. This is a significant aspect of Postcolonial theory and it dictates that the actions and interpretations of one affect the actions and interpretations of the other.

Forster, as the implied author or "the ideological value system that the texts, indirectly and by combining all its resources, presents and represents" (Lothe 19) creates many characters in A Passage to India that illustrate this point. **Characterization** can be defined as how characters are "introduced, shaped, and developed" (Lothe 81) by the implied author through the mechanism of the narrator. Characters are merely components of a story that serve as vehicles for performing or receiving action. Characterization is the process by which characters are defined and given meaning and purpose in the narrative. In Narrative in Fiction and Film, this process is described as occurring by one of two means: "Direct definition", where the narrator tells the reader what the character is like in a direct statement and "indirect presentation", where the narrator shows the reader what the character is like in an indirect manner. According to Lothe, indirect presentation can be achieved through the description of action, the character's thoughts and/ or words, the external appearance and behavior of the character, and the character's physical surroundings (Lothe 81-84). With

regard to characterization, Forster describes two different kinds of characters in Aspects of the Novel: flat and round. Flat characters, also known as "types" or "caricatures" are "constructed around a single idea or quality" and can be summed up in one sentence. They also have no "pleasures" or "private lusts and aches". These types of characters are limited in that they merely reinforce the defining sentence repeatedly throughout the novel unchanged by circumstances. Thus these types of characters do not undergo character development as the plot progresses and they are bound to remain the same throughout the narrative (Aspects of the Novel 76-77). The reader is only allowed access to flat characters through the characters' actions. In A Passage to India, Ronny Heaslop is a perfect example of a flat character. He appears to have no "pleasures", "private lusts", or "aches". His development as a character remains stagnant. The reader is allowed access to him only through his actions and he can be defined by a single sentence. The sentence that best defines Ronny is a piece of dialogue in A Passage to India where he exclaims to his mother, Mrs Moore; "'We're not out here for the purpose of behaving pleasantly!'" (A Passage to India 45). Congruently, Ronny proves to be unfailingly unpleasant throughout the novel.

Round characters, according to Forster, are the opposites of flat characters. Round characters are complex creations that go beyond mirroring human behavior by making known their morals and other workings connected to their emotions and intellect. These characters undergo character development through the course of a novel and cannot be defined by just one sentence: "The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat" (Aspects of the Novel 85). In A Passage to India Mrs Moore is an example of a round character. The reader is allowed access to her thoughts and actions, she is changed by circumstances in the novel, and she is portrayed as intelligent, reflective, compassionate, and morally upright.

Although not defined by Forster as a third type of character, he does discuss the possibility of a type of hybrid character that vacillates between flat and round. In a discussion on the character of Lady Bertram from Jane Austin's Mansfield Park Forster allows for the possibility that a character can "in a single sentence [be] inflated into a round character and collapsed into a flat one" (Aspects of the Novel 84). An example of this type of flat/round character in A Passage to India may be Adela. When Adela says; "I want to see the *real* India" (A Passage to India 21), she seems to be summing up her existence in the novel, as the statement gives the reader a notion of Adela's naivety, inquisitiveness, and ignorance. Adela tries to reach beyond the realm of her flat existence, and it is this effort that gives her a slight sense of roundness. Ultimately, however, she fails and remains as flat as she began.

Within the context of this thesis, the term '**gender'** will be used to signify a person's physical sex. This specification is made in recognition of the otherwise common distinction between gender and physical sex, with gender defined as a person's sex *identity* and physical sex simply denoting which physical genital attributes a person has. In other words, in the broader definition of gender, someone can identify themselves as female, while possessing male genitalia. The use of the more narrow definition of gender that I will be using in this thesis is made possible due to the fact that no character portrayed in A Passage to India is described as having physical sexual attributes that contradict their perceived gender.

Although nearly every character Forster depicts in A Passage to India is interesting in one way or another, this thesis will focus primarily on Adela Quested, Ronny Heaslop, Mrs Moore, and Aziz.

Adela Quested—Adela arrives in India, accompanied by Mrs Moore, to be reunited with her fiancée, Ronny Heaslop. Upon arrival she is disappointed when the India that is presented to her by her imperialist British companions does not reflect the India she had

imagined prior to arrival. However, when she is offered the opportunity to see the "real" India, she becomes disoriented and unable to see it for what it really is. Her expectations of what she thought she would find in India and her inability to connect with other characters in the novel (both Western and Eastern) ultimately get in the way of her perception of India for what it really is.

Mrs Moore—She is the most intelligent, introspective, and reflective character in A Passage to India. The reader is granted access to her through both her thoughts and her actions, although as the narrative progresses this access becomes increasingly limited. She is a complex character who lives within the realm of imperialism and seems to abide by its conventions for the most part, yet internally she is often conflicted and continually questions the cultural norms around her.

Ronny Heaslop—Although neither deep nor multi-dimensional, Ronny Heaslop is an important character. He is ordinary, shallow, flat, and nearly despicable yet he has a position of power which gives him high personal and professional status. In addition to being one of the main characters of the novel, Ronny is interesting in that he is representative of a certain type of Colonizer- one who is granted power in the colonial setting that would never otherwise have been granted to him. This is well illustrated through Forster's caricature-like characterization of Ronny contrasted against the position of power Ronny holds, making him simultaneously dangerous and ridiculous. Although Ronny is usually overlooked in discussions of A Passage to India, most likely due to his lack of depth as a character, I have chosen to center my discussion of A Passage to India primarily on the characters of Ronny and Aziz. This choice is made both in spite of and because of Ronny's lack of depth as a character, which is interesting given his central role in the plot. The character of Ronny Heaslop will be discussed in each chapter but the approach will be from different angles including Ronny as a colonizing male in chapter two and Ronny as a domestic figure in the

form of a husband-to-be and as a son in chapter three. I focus on Ronny particularly as a pivotal character in the novel because he is so paradoxical; he is complex, yet simple; he is in a position that affords him the opportunity to have great influence, yet is seemingly ineffectual- both personally and professionally; he is an agent of the British government, yet he manages to make a mockery of the British judicial system in the courtroom in Chandrapore.

Aziz—Forster uses Aziz as a contrast to his stoic male stereotype. Forster uses his third-person narrator to lend more depth to Aziz, and the reader is given access to Aziz's emotions throughout the novel, including his mourning of the loss of his wife, his embarrassment over the standard of his living situation, and his reaction of fear and shock upon being accused of assaulting Adela. The characterization of Ronny and Aziz furthers the contrast between them, as the reader gets to know Aziz through his thoughts, feelings, actions, and words, whereas the reader only knows Ronny through his actions and words.

In terms of theoretical movements underway during the time Forster wrote and published A Passage to India, Realism and Modernism were on the forefront of literary circles. A Passage to India is clearly influenced by both, as is seen through Forster's unforgiving and honest portrayal of his characters and the mixed themes of disillusionment and hope that run through the novel. In the original 1924 *Guardian* review of A Passage to India, the reviewer comments:

> We have had novels about India from the British point of view and from the native point of view, and in each case with sympathy for the other side; but the sympathy has been intended, and in this novel there is not the slightest suggestion of anything but a personal impression, with the prejudices and limitations of the writer frankly exposed. Mr. Forster, in fact, has reached the stage in his development as an artist when, in his own words about Miss

> Quested, he is [‘]no longer examining life, but being examined by it.[’] He has been examined by India, and this is his confession. (*The Guardian Unlimited*)

One of the things that make A Passage to India so interesting to read is precisely this blend of opposing perspectives. Not only does Forster give the Indian characters a voice and a point of view, along with their British counterparts, but he also manipulates his characters by adding or subtracting depth from his presentation of them in order to draw attention towards certain characters. By giving depth to unexpected characters (Aziz, an Indian, and Mrs Moore, a woman, for example) and taking away depth from a character who would have traditionally been perceived as more important (Ronny, a British male government official) Forster draws attention to these characters and creates a subtext of underlying social commentary.

Rather than guessing at what techniques Forster used in writing A Passage to India, I will refer to his book Aspects of the Novel, which is based on a series of lectures he gave at Trinity College in 1927. Forster does not explicitly discuss the techniques he employed in the writing of A Passage to India, however he does discuss his thoughts on novels and components of novels in general, many of which are relevant to this discussion and shed light on aspects of A Passage to India. Forster writes that the “backbone” of all novels is that they tell a story. Suspense is a crucial ingredient of the story and can cause the reader to both want to know and not want to know what will happen next (Aspects of the Novel 34-35). Novels pay a “double allegiance” to time and value, according to Forster. In order to be successful, they must adhere to conventions tied to chronology, but writers can create value by drawing attention to certain moments within the timeline of the novel (Aspects of the Novel 36). Similarly, writers can create value centered on particular characters in the novel. Forster works from the premise that characters are people and that the writer shares an “affinity” with the characters since both are humans. The result of this connection between

character and writer is that the writer "makes up a number of word-masses roughly describing himself" to some degree through his characters (Aspects of the Novel 52). Further illustrative of Forster's affirmation of the character/ writer connection is his statement that "[a] novel is based on evidence + or – x, the unknown quantity being the temperament of the novelist" (Aspects of the Novel 53). Although characters are modeled after humans, the main difference between the two is that one can know a character inside and out through his or her thoughts and actions, while people can only be known through their actions (including speech, gestures, facial expressions, body language, etc.). Therefore, it is easier to become intimately familiar quickly with a character than a real person.

With regard to a specific discussion of how Forster's theoretical perspectives influenced his writing of A Passage to India, I was fortunate to come across an interview where Forster discusses the process involved in writing the novel: "I had a great deal of difficulty with [A Passage to India] and thought I would never finish it. I began it in 1912, and then came the war. I took it with me when I returned to India in 1921 but found what I had written wasn't India at all. It was like sticking a photograph on a picture. However, I couldn't *write* it when I was in India. When I got away, I could get on with it" (Forster quoted in "The Art of Fiction No. 1"). The interruption of the war and his subsequent return to India gave Forster the chance to reevaluate what he had written. In his use of the "picture" metaphor, Forster hints at his desire to portray an honest account of the people and places that made up India at the time when he was writing the novel. In the excerpt from the *Guardian* above, Forster is described as more of a spectator than a commentator of life, and his descriptions seem to stem from raw observation of the finite details of life. Forster writes in A Passage to India; "Most of life is so dull that there is nothing to be said about it, and the books and talks that would describe it as interesting are obliged to exaggerate, in the hope of justifying their own existence" (124). Writing through the voice of his narrator, Forster

seems to reject the idea of exaggeration, which leads one to believe that the account he relates in A Passage to India was completely probable during the time in which it takes place.

Forster's method aside, my own method is based on the assumption that a text's meaning, which is located within the text, and a text's significance, which is located outside of the text, are both variable. My decision to take this approach is based on my acknowledgement of novels as being the products of several complicated, intertwined processes which the author is not entirely able to control and is additionally not always even conscious of. The discussion that follows is based on my interpretation of the novel and, although supported by the theoretical perspectives presented in Narrative theory, Postcolonial theory, and Feminist theory, it is my own understanding of how these theoretical perspectives fit into the plot of the text that serves as the starting point for this discussion. Narrative theory is related to close reading and close textual analysis, which are methods that I employ in my examination of A Passage to India. Postcolonial theory also utilizes close reading and close textual analysis in order to extrapolate meaning from texts, but extra-textual influences also impact the meaning of a text in this school of thought. Feminist theory is similar to Postcolonial theory in that both employ close reading and close analysis of the text, while also emphasizing the importance of factors outside the text as well. A Passage to India is a highly complex novel and, although I will try to avoid over-simplifications in my discussion of it, some elements will have to be simplified in order for me to devote more attention to other elements that have a direct relevance to my discussion of the novel. With this in mind, I will examine A Passage to India within its cultural, political, social, and historical context, while performing a close reading, and subsequent close interpretation, of the primary text. I base my analysis on direct quotations from the text to support my claims, which will be based on direct commentary on each respective quotation I extrapolate from A Passage to India. In so doing I will address the central questions of this thesis by illustrating how distance is the

enabling factor fueling the power dichotomy between the Colonizer and the Colonized and between men and women in A Passage to India. Simultaneously, I will address the question of how distance necessitates the reliance upon stereotypes as a means of understanding people and places in the novel.

In terms of what follows in the rest of this thesis, chapter two will focus on the relationship between the British Colonizers and the Indian Colonized. Emphasis will be on how these two parties represent the abstract constructs of the West and the East. The goal of chapter two is to show that distance is the enabling factor in A Passage to India that fuels the power dichotomy between the Colonizers and the Colonized and necessitates the reliance upon stereotypes as a means of understanding people and places. These points will be shown through an analysis of the types of distance evident in A Passage to India between the Colonizers and the Colonized. These types of distance will be linked to a discussion of how they enable a power hierarchy based on superiority and control gained through imperialism, colonialism, and the creation of a ruling class and an under-class where the West assumes the position of power and exploits the East. Stereotypes of Colonizers and Colonized will be linked to the types of distance between them in terms of binary opposition in the novel. Examples of such stereotypes are that Colonizers are strong, dominant, good, civilized, complex, and intelligent while the Colonized are weak, submissive, bad, savage, primitive, and stupid.

Chapter three will focus on the relationship between male and female characters in A Passage to India. The goal of chapter three is to persuasively demonstrate that distance is the enabling factor that fuels the power dichotomy between male and female characters and that it necessitates the reliance upon stereotypes as a means of understanding people and places in the novel. This will be achieved through a discussion of the types of distance between the male and female characters in A Passage to India and how this fuels a power dichotomy

between male and female characters where male characters are granted the opportunity to attain positions of power, influence, and visibility that female characters are not granted access to. The connection between stereotypes and distance with regards to the male and female characters will focus on binary oppositions that lead to stereotypes of both men and women in the novel. Examples of some of these stereotypes are that men are logical, dominant, strong, and informed while women are emotional, submissive, weak, and uninformed.

In chapter four, the final chapter, all points of the argument will be summed up and this thesis will come to a final conclusion. In order to achieve this, I will first reiterate what is meant by the term 'distance' in the context of this thesis and the types of distance relevant to this discussion. This will be followed by a review of the types of distance evident in A Passage to India and how they lead to the creation of, reliance upon, and perpetuation of stereotypes in A Passage to India. This will be followed by a summation of how the above can be seen in A Passage to India, how Forster communicates how stereotypes work in general and in culture/ society as seen in A Passage to India, how stereotypes are problematized in A Passage to India, and the effect of this presentation and problematization of stereotypes.

Chapter Two

Power, Distance, and Stereotyping between Colonizer and Colonized in

A Passage to India

Introduction

"By 1914 […] Europe held a grand total of roughly 85 per cent of the Earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions, and commonwealths" (Said 6). A Passage to India deals with many complex issues surrounding colonialism and the 'Orient'. In accordance with Edward Said's ideas concerning what he calls "Orientalism", the concept of the Orient is something that, on one hand, was created by the West and represents a Euro-centric ideal of Eastern culture, and on the other hand is an actual place that existed long before it was given that name. The Orient moved from being merely a projected European ideal of the East to being something that could stand on its own. However, through the initial European idealization of the Orient, a foundation was created that made it possible for the Occident to infiltrate the Orient and made possible the exportation of European culture into the East. In A Passage to India Forster depicts Orientalism as a direct response to the European culture that it came from. In doing so, he shows indirectly how power is gained and used in order to maintain ideals. This process gained momentum through the institution of colonialism. For the sake of this discussion, it is important to acknowledge the East and West as *places* and the Colonizers and Colonized as *people* who fall under the social and cultural jurisdiction of those places. The four main characters in the novel – Ronny, a British officer; Aziz, an Indian doctor; Mrs Moore, Ronny's mother; and Adela, Ronny's fiancé – plus a few other characters, are representative of the constituents of colonialism and are used in the novel as a means to represent power relations between Colonizer and Colonized and the East and the

West in general. In this chapter I will show how distance fuels the power dichotomy between the British colonizers and the Indian Colonized in A Passage to India and how distance necessitates the reliance upon stereotypes as a means of understanding people and places in the novel.

Power Hierarchies between the Colonizer and the Colonized

The East and the West, as places, are examples of both concrete and abstract space. They are concrete places that physically exist, yet the notion of them as the East and the West are abstract constructs created by Westerners in order to establish and enforce an emphasis on cultural difference, spatial distance, and a power hierarchy between the two where the West has control over the East. If we claim that they are not like us, that they are different from us, then we do not need to treat them like us or as we would treat each other:

> Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with such words and concepts as 'inferior' or 'subject races', 'subordinate peoples', 'dependency', expansion', and 'authority'. (Said 8)

The insistence on difference leads to a hierarchy where one party assumes power over another seemingly powerless party. Distance between the two parties helps both parties but in totally different ways. Distance helps the powerful justify and rationalize their position, as they are removed from the real situation of how they have affected the other party and are left to idealize the situation they have caused. Distance helps the weak gain the momentum to

fight back against their oppressors, since the powerful continually underestimate the weak and are too far-removed from the actual situation to see resistance coming.

For the possibility of attaining distance from something, there must exist something for one to be distant from. The state of distance relies upon the assumption of the existence of a center point that one either gravitates towards or moves away from. In A Passage to India, as in other colonial and postcolonial settings, distance is measured in terms of proximity to or from the cultural center, which is automatically assumed to be one and the same as the supposed cultural center of the world. This cultural center is presumed by the Westerners to be located in the West (traditionally Oxford, Cambridge, and Paris) and is seen as a universal truth in their eyes. Their insistence that the center of universal culture originates from the West is a reflection of their desire to conquer the people inhabiting the geographic locations taken over through the process of imperialism. The faith in the existence of a single cultural center is shortsighted in that it negates the aspect of cultural relativity; the East is only East when seen from the West. What may be considered the center of, or central to, one culture might not be considered the center of or central to another culture. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha writes that "[a]n important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the colonial construction of otherness" (66). The idea that there exists a fixed global cultural center is irrational due to the fact that people, places, and things are continually changing over time. Moreover, it is dubious to presume that there is one fixed global cultural center because all cultures possess centers of their own. Traditionally the cultural center of the world was presumed to be a fixed entity located in the West. The East and the West, as places, are examples of both concrete and abstract space. They are concrete places that physically exist, yet the notion of them as the East and the West are abstract constructs created by Westerners in order to establish and enforce an emphasis on cultural difference, spatial distance, and a power

hierarchy between the two where the West has control over the East. Likewise, India is both a concrete and an abstract place. It is a real, physical place that exists on a map and has tangible physical features, yet it also exists on an abstract, intangible level shaded by subjectivity within the minds of individuals— both British and Indian.

Distance and Power in A Passage to India

In A Passage to India distance enables the power dichotomy between the West and East. It is the power relationship between the Western Colonizers and the Eastern Colonized that enables the spreading of Western culture throughout the East. Because the West is in the position of power, Westerners view Western culture in general as superior to Eastern culture. In A Passage to India this is exemplified when Mrs Turton displays a distanced, detached attitude at the Bridge Party upon realizing that some, if not all, of the Indians in her company speak English: "'They pass Paris on the way, no doubt,' said Mrs Turton, as if she was describing the movements of migratory birds. Her manner had grown more distant since she had discovered that some of the group was westernized, and might apply her own standards to her" (A Passage to India 38). Mrs Turton shows her deliberate detachment from the Indians by referring to them in the third person tense while in their presence. In addition to this, the narrator's comment that hints towards her regard to them as migratory animals demonstrates her blatant opinion of them as less than human. This attitude on the part of the British connotes a patronizing attitude that is in line with the ideology of Easterners as being inferior to Westerners. Because Mrs Turton is a Westerner and is therefore in a position of power over the Indian subjects, she is granted the privilege of interpreting and, subsequently, misinterpreting them. Even as the Indians try to communicate with the British in English, Mrs Turton is able to use this contact experience against the Indians in order to distance herself even more from them. Just as a physical bridge can emphasize the division of two

land masses while simultaneously connecting them, the Bridge Party ends up having the same function between the Indians and the British. The irony in this is that the whole premise for their meeting at the Bridge Party is to make connections, get to know one another better, and bridge the gap between East and West. This proves to be impossible, though, because the British are too reliant on the distance that exists between East and West and the stereotypes that were created as a result of that distance in order to justify their presence in India. The Colonizer must gain power over the Colonized in some way in order to achieve whatever economic or social goal they set out to achieve in the first place. In order to achieve this, the Colonizers separate themselves from the Colonized and establish a social hierarchy with the Colonizer in the position of power. This separation between Colonizers and Colonized results in distancing between the Colonizer and the Colonized and the East and the West. Many types of distance are evident in the novel and include emotional distance, physical distance, and social distance.

Emotional Distance

The most prevalent form of distance through which power is gained by the West over the East in A Passage to India is emotional distance, which is defined in the introduction of this thesis as the inability to sympathize with someone of a different race or sex,. The Colonizer must be convinced of his or her righteousness, which is a result of a lack of understanding of the Colonized, in order to continue on with the process of colonization. In this sense, colonization becomes a cause in which the Colonizers must unite to dominate and control the Colonized. The Colonizer must justify to himself or herself that the part that he or she plays in the process of colonization is 'right' or 'correct', which is based on a Eurocentric ideal of morals. Forster explores and exposes this dynamic in A Passage to India when Professor Fielding is informed of Aziz's alleged attack on Adela:

> He was still after facts, though the herd had decided on emotion. Nothing enrages Anglo-India more that the lantern of reason if it is exhibited for one moment after its extinction is decreed. All over Chandrapore that day the Europeans were putting aside their normal personalities and sinking themselves in their community. Pity, wrath, heroism, filled them, but the power of putting two and two together was annihilated. (A Passage to India 154- 155)

This example underscores Forster's sentiments regarding the idea of causes. It is easy to imagine in this example that he likens himself to Fielding who, rather than following the consensus of the "herd", dares to think for himself and use logic and reason to come to his own conclusion. The other British characters alluded to in this example seem to equate racial unity with national loyalty and it is this attitude that precludes them from being able to gain emotional proximity to the Indians in the novel. The Colonizer may often believe that he or she is doing the native people a favor by introducing them to 'modernity', 'civilization', 'culture', etc., all of which are based on the misconception that the natives had none of this to begin with. Emotional distancing and the lack of interest in cross-cultural relations on the British characters' side can be seen over and over again in A Passage to India and is made explicit through the words of Mr Turton in a conversation he has with Fielding just after Mr Turton informs Fielding of Aziz's alleged assault on Adela: "'I have had twenty-five years' experience of this country […] and during those twenty-five years I have never known anything but disaster result when English people and Indians attempt to be intimate socially. Intercourse, yes. Courtesy, by all means. Intimacy – never, never'" (A Passage to India 153). For the sake of establishing emotional ties between the Easterners and the Westerners, attitudes such as Mr Turton's must change. However, it is clear that the emotional distancing

evident between the Westerners and the Easterners in the novel is deliberate, at least on the side of the British.

Physical Distance

Distance is also a factor in the physical layout of the society depicted in A Passage to India. The distance that separates people socially in Chandrapore most likely stems from the physical distance, or the space between concrete locations, that defines the Indian realm from the Anglo-Indian realm. In *Culture and Imperialism* Said comments on Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo* and remarks that the novel "embodies the […] paternalistic arrogance of imperialism" (xx). This comment could also be applied to A Passage to India and is exemplified in the physical distance that defines the British settlement from the Indian town. The location of the English settlement above the Indian bazaars is symbolic of the power that the British hold over the Indians: "In the bazaars there is no painting and scarcely any carving. The very wood seems made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving. […] Houses belonging to Eurasians stand on the high ground by the railway station […] and viewed hence Chandrapore appears to be a totally different place" (A Passage to India 5-6). The Indians must inhabit the muddy lower region, while the British have the privilege of being perched above the mud and dirt of the city and the Bazaars. In a sense, their location on the high ground above the Indian settlement creates a 'big-brother'-type situation where the British can observe, control, and oversee everything that the Indians do below without the Indians necessarily knowing it. By inhabiting the upper regions, the British characters deny the use of this area for Indian settlement: "Negation and negativity in this novel are related in complex ways to place and space (interiority and exteriority) and to the diverse shapes of inclusion and exclusion supposed by the different religious orderings of life" (Beer 46). While Beer argues that it is religion that serves as the basis for the divide in the use of

physical space in the novel, I see it as being more related to race. Because the British have taken the best land for themselves, the Indians must take whatever is left. The British settlement is also described as "a tropical pleasance" (A Passage to India 6) and the trees that serve as a backdrop for their settlement hide the dirty truth of the Bazaars and the people who inhabit them to the extent that an illusion of paradise is created. In this sense, the British inhabitants can carry out their daily lives in voluntary denial of the existence of anything unpleasantly Indian, unfamiliar, or 'other'.

In a further attempt to create a familiar atmosphere, the British have designed the streets to be like those one might find in England: "The roads, named after victorious generals and intersecting at right angles, were symbolic of the net Great Britain had thrown over India. He felt caught in their meshes" (A Passage to India 14). In the India depicted that England has created, the British are the fishermen and the Indians are their prey. Aziz reflects that he feels "caught" in the British fishing net that is the grid of intersecting streets. As if this were not insult enough, the power of the British is reinforced by the naming of the streets after "victorious generals", which must have served as an ugly reminder to the Indians of the vast power of the British Empire. On another level, the naming of the streets and their angular layout are yet another example of the attempt on the part of the British to create a 'little England' in India, and thus make the unfamiliar or 'other' that is India, feel more familiar.

Social Distance

Another way in which power is gained in A Passage to India is through social distancing, which denotes a difference in customs and practices between the Westerners and Easterners. For example, Indians are not allowed on the Club premises, which serve as a mini-England socially and culturally. Although the British live in India, they do not live *with* the Indians.

Likewise, the Indians depicted in the novel discuss the benefits in keeping a distance from the Westerners who inhabit their homeland. In A Passage to India the evidence of social distancing can be seen on part of several characters. Ronny Heaslop, for example, has distanced himself so much from the Indian people that he seems incapable of recognizing them as individuals: "He did not mean to be rude to the two men, but the only link he could be conscious of with an Indian was the official and neither happened to be his subordinate. As private individuals he forgot them" (A Passage to India 70). Ronny is so detached from the Indian people in Chandrapore, other than from those who serve him, that he is unable to relate to them and is seemingly incapable of communicating with them. His perception of the Indians seems to be rigidly based on a master/ servant relationship dynamic, and it seems that there is no room in this model of his for any Indian who does not fit this mold. Thus, Ronny thinks he knows India and Indians but, in fact, he only knows them in the way he allows himself to know them. Ronny's perception of the Indians is limited by his arrogance and ignorance: By 'knowing' the native population in these terms, discriminatory and authoritarian forms of political control are considered appropriate. The colonized population is then deemed to be both the cause and effect of the system, imprisoned in the circle of interpretation. (Bhabha 83) Ronny's attitude towards the Indian subjects he comes across in his job shows a combination of distance and patronization. He does not seem interested in truly getting involved, and seems to view the cases that are brought before him as a silly waste of his time. Furthermore, the narrator's presentation of Ronny as a flat, one-dimensional character gives the reader the impression that Ronny is not even capable of approaching the Indians with an open mind because this goes beyond the limits of what he is capable of on a narrative level. Although he seems to have faith in the judicial system, Ronny does not have faith in the Indian subjects who come before him in the court of law: "Everyday he worked hard in the court trying to decide which of two untrue accounts was the

less untrue […]" (A Passage to India 46). In this way, Ronny unknowingly admits that he is biased against all Indians who come before him in court and he patronizingly shows that he regards the Indians as silly, quarreling children. Ronny's attitude reinforces the voice that Said mimics in describing the Western view in Conrad's *Nostromo*: "We created them, we taught them to speak and think, and when they rebel they simply confirm our views of them as silly children […]" (Said xx). More than being indifferent to the Indians, Ronny seems to feel repugnance towards them. Although this puts his Indian subjects in a bad light, it also puts him in a bad light as it illuminates a possibly overlooked aspect of his job: In making a mockery of the cases that the Indians bring into the court, Ronny also makes a mockery of his own job of defending the truth. In light of this, if the Indians are nothing more than silly children quarreling and telling untrue tales, then he is nothing more than a nursemaid whose job it is to quiet the quarrels and keep the peace. As is illustrated in Postcolonial theory, this is the extent in which the Colonizer and Colonized are inextricably linked: the actions and interpretations of one affect the behavior and interpretations of the other. The fact that they are linked in this manner is evidence of the social distance that divides them.

Dehumanization as a Lead-in to Stereotypes

Although it would be simpler to think of colonialism as being made-up of two opposing homogenous groups, this is rarely the case, as is displayed in A Passage to India. In the novel, the Indians depicted come from both Muslim and Hindu backgrounds and have conflicts with each other based on differing religious and cultural practices. However, the two groups come closer to achieving unity with each other because of the shared oppression they face at the hand of the British. This shows the extent in which the Colonizer and Colonized are trapped in a state of co-dependence and results in a kind of symbiosis where, in the frame of colonization, one cannot exist without the other. Without the existence of a

colonizing force, or 'Colonizer', there is no 'Colonized' and vice versa. The effects of colonization take their toll on both parties involved in similar ways: "Colonisation dehumanises and demonises the colonized" (Abu Baker 76). Through the use of stereotypes, the Colonizer experiences the Colonized as an object or thing, rather than a thinking, feeling, human individual. Thus, the colonized subject is perceived by the Colonizer as other than human or sub-human and has undergone the process of dehumanization.

Simultaneously, one may argue that the process of colonization also "dehumanizes and demonizes" the Colonizer. Because both Colonizer and Colonized are trapped in an involuntary state of symbiosis, that which inflicts the one must, in turn, inflict the other: "[…] imperialism is a system. Life in one subordinate realm of experience is imprinted by the fictions and follies of the dominant realm. But the reverse is true, too, as experience in the dominant society comes to depend uncritically on natives and their territories perceived as in need of *la mission civilisatrice"* (Said xxi). The delicate atmosphere of colonialism is such that when a change occurs on one end, the other end is undoubtedly affected too. Every action causes a reaction and every reaction stems from an action.

The process of dehumanization in A Passage to India is demonstrated through several characters. Ronny Heaslop shows a dehumanized attitude towards the Indians through his comments about England's presence in India and his own involvement in this scheme: "We're not pleasant in India and we don't intend to be pleasant. We've something more important to do" (A Passage to India 45). Ronny's lack of humanitarian values hinders his ability to do his job well. This is ironic because he places duty above all else, yet the morally paralyzed way in which he sets about performing his duties serves as an occlusion to his ability to actually perform them well. This irony is indicative of the dehumanization of Ronny on the part of the narrator. By presenting Ronny as a character whose professional position requires him to think and feel and be able to relate to other people, yet is unable to

do any of those things, the narrator highlights the conflicted nature of Ronny. However, that is not to say that Ronny is aware that he is conflicted or that he realizes that his position is ironic in light of his attributes (or lack thereof). Thus, the narrator demonstrates narrative distance from Ronny through the use of dehumanization and irony. Ronny's dehumanized attitude also mimics the premise that colonialism is based on the notion that European civilization is superior to anything non-European and, thus, not humanly equal and deserving of such attention. Ronny also shows signs that he has been dehumanized by the things he says and the rhetoric he uses on a regular basis: "He had been using phrases and arguments that he had picked up from older officials, and he did not feel quite sure of himself […] The phrases worked and were in current use at the Club […]" (A Passage to India 29). The club is a caricature of British society and Ronny is a caricature of a British imperial officer in India. In an almost robotic manner, Ronny has begun basing his thoughts, words, and actions off of those of the other English officials. He does not seem to have any genuine humanly thoughts or feelings and seems to willingly succumb to a nearly brainwashed state. He does this in an effort towards self-preservation while attempting to portray professionalism and prove his loyalty to England.

Distance and Stereotypes—

The Historical Basis for the Creation of Colonial Stereotypes

The terms 'Colonizer' and 'Colonized' are used to classify people and are, thus, both separate from and incorporated into who the people they describe are as individuals. In other words, these terms denote *what* is expected of the different characters, and they dictate to some extent *how* they are to behave, but these terms do not necessarily define *who* these people are. While distance leads to dehumanization, it is the combination of the two that leads to

stereotypes. Stereotypes are created when the distant, or unfamiliar, is caricatured based on a fixed set of generalizations that are used as a means of classification. If something or someone is known or familiar, the need to classify, categorize, and label becomes obsolete. Stereotyping is central to the process of colonization: "Colonialism, which has not bothered to put too fine a point on its efforts, has never ceased to maintain that the Negro is savage; and for the colonist, the Negro was neither an Angolan nor a Nigerian, for he simply spoke of 'the Negro'. For colonialism, this vast continent was the haunt of savages […]" (Fanon 38). By stereotyping the Negro, or 'other', as "savage", the Colonizer simplifies his task of conquering. Plurality cannot be recognized by the Colonizer in a colonial context because this would mean that the Colonizer would have to acknowledge the human attribute of individuality in the colonized subjects, which would contradict the image of them as dehumanized, animal-like "savages".

In *Cultural Identity and Diaspora,* Stuart Hall describes 'cultural identity' as "reflect[ing] the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history" (111). Affirmations of unity, like this, are useful in terms of strengthening and uplifting groups of people but can also be dangerous weapons used as a means of suppression, degradation, and discrimination in that they create distance through the generation of the concept of 'us and them', which is at the core of 'otherness'. This atmosphere of labeling and creating bonds of unity between people of similar backgrounds leads to a separation of one kind or another and creates societal categories and subcategories in the labeling of dominant-cultures, counter-cultures, and sub-cultures as such. In creating and highlighting these differences, distancing takes place and stereotypes become commonplace.

Stereotyping of the Colonizers and the Colonized

In A Passage to India the stereotypes that are evident between the East and the West and Colonizer and Colonized follow a pattern: The traditional Western imperialistic ideal of the Colonizers as strong, dominant, masculine, intelligent, and civilized; and the traditional Western imperialistic perception of the Colonized in the East as weak, submissive, feminine, naïve, and uncivilized. Forster both presents these stereotypes and problematizes them. Likewise, in A Passage to India the East can be seen as being likened to the stereotypical, traditional view of a female and West as male. This has evident implications with regards to the power hierarchy that results between the two places.

The Western inhabitants carry out their daily lives in voluntary denial of the existence of anything unpleasantly Indian, Eastern, unfamiliar, or 'other'. If they do recognize the East as existing, for the West, the East can only exist on Western terms and is defined from a Western perspective. It is not enough that the East exists; it has to exist on the West's terms or it does not exist at all. This is due to the fact that the use of generalizations in the form of stereotypes precludes one's ability to see people for who they really are. With regards to " the marking of the subject within the practices and discourses of a colonial culture […] [s]uch dramas are enacted *every day* in colonial societies, says Fanon, employing a theatrical metaphor – the scene – which emphasizes the visible – the seen" (Fanon paraphrased in Bhabha 76). In A Passage to India the British create a "scene", which is that of a dominant, superior West ruling over a weak, submissive East. They carry this "scene" so far as to prosecute Aziz in a court of law simply because a British woman has made an accusation against him. The Brit's assumption that Aziz is guilty is based on their notions that the West is civilized and the East is barbaric and uncivilized When Adela confesses that she was not assaulted by Aziz and drops her charges against him, her British compatriots are shocked. Part of this shock stems from the fact that they have difficulty believing that Adela had been

creating a "scene" all along. When Adela says; "'Ronny, he's innocent; I made an awful mistake.'" Ronny then answers; "'I don't quite know what you're saying, and I don't think you do'" (A Passage to India 190- 191). The West, through Ronny Heaslop, fall for the "scene" of the illusion Adela creates and they become unable to really see Aziz and the East for what they actually are. Adela is able to use the West's preconceived notions to her benefit by delivering the performance that they want to believe. Their need to believe that she, a white woman, had been assaulted by an Indian man confirmed the stereotype of the Indians as uncultured, uncivilized, barbaric animals that they were so desperate to maintain in order to justify their own presence and dealings with the Indians. As highlighted here, the court trial becomes a battle ground between the West and the East where each side is only able to 'know' the opponent through the stereotypes they have come to rely on, when in actuality it is really a trial between two *individuals:*

> The story is, essentially, that of the close contact of East and West in the persons of Dr. Aziz, a Moslem, assistant medical officers of the Chandrapore Hospital, and Mr. Fielding, principal of the College. In all the other characters the contact is governed by conventions - official or would-be sympathetic - but in them it is as close as blood itself allows. So far as affection is concerned they are friends, so that the interplay of East and West is along the very finest channels of human intercourse - suggesting the comparison of the blood and air vessels in the lungs; but the friendship is always at the mercy of the feelings which rise from the deeps of racial personality. (*The Guardian Unlimited*)

The impossibility of the forging of a friendship between East and West is highlighted through the proceedings of the court trial and the racial riots that ensue and the characters on both sides resort to the use of stereotypes as a means of informing their thoughts and actions.

In A Passage to India several other scenarios are presented in which the characters perpetuate and rely on stereotypes to inform their thoughts and actions. These stereotypes are used as a means to guide behavior and spread ideology among both the Colonizers and the Colonized: "[Ronny] knew the type; he knew all the types, and this was the spoilt westernized" (A Passage to India 70). In claiming that he knows all the "types", Ronny reveals his dependence on stereotypes of the Indians. Ronny, as a character, also reinforces the patriarchal stereotype of the patronizing, condescending Colonizer who insists on defining the people and places he encounters in the colonial sphere in his own terms. This arrogant perspective is articulated by Said when he writes; "We Westerners will decide who is a good native or a bad, because all natives have sufficient existence by virtue of our recognition" (xx). It is not enough that the Indians exist; they have to exist on the Colonizer's terms or they do not exist at all. Even if the Indians are recognized as existing, their existence is always seen as either in spite of or because of the Colonizers. The Indians in A Passage to India also display a reliance on stereotypes about their British counterparts to inform their thinking: "'The average woman is like Mrs Turton, and, Aziz, you know what she is.' Aziz did not know, but said he did. He too generalized from his disappointments – it is difficult for members of a subject race to do otherwise" (A Passage to India 11). Aziz succumbs to the stereotypical mindset that all British women are like Mrs Turton. As is usual, the stereotype is used to try to explain a behavior in a way that shifts blame from oneself to that of the members of the 'other' group as a defense mechanism. Thus the cleft between the two 'others' of Colonizer and Colonized is widened.

How These Stereotypes *A*re Utilized by the Colonizers and the Colonized

The West automatically assumes that the East will submit to them because they view the East as being weak. One example of how this is made evident in A Passage to India is through

Major Callendar's underestimation of Aziz's capabilities and opinion of the British presence in India:

> The Major, who had been up half the night, wanted damn well to know why Aziz had not come promptly when summoned. [… The Major] strode away in a temper, without waiting for the excuse, which as far as it went was a sound one: the Cow Hospital was in a straight line between Hamidullah's house and his own, so Aziz had naturally passed it. He never realized that the educated Indians visited one another constantly, and were weaving, however painfully, a new social fabric. Caste 'or something of the sort' would prevent them. He only knew that no one ever told him the truth, although he had been in the country for twenty years" (A Passage to India 49)

Major Callendar's impatience with Aziz is based on his assumption that Aziz was going to fabricate an excuse about why he had not come promptly when summoned by the Major. Despite having been in India for twenty years, the Major still has no understanding of how the Indians interact with one another. However, through his status as a British official in India, the Major is in a position where he is apparently not held accountable for his lack of intimate knowledge of the social habits of the Indian subjects. This shows the amount of power the British have over the Indians in this setting and is symbolic of the West's complete underestimation and devaluation of the East. Through the process of interpreting and misinterpreting the East, and then continuing to create definitions based on these misinterpretations, the West has made itself incapable of seeing the East for what it really is; all the West is able to perceive of the East is what it has chosen to perceive.

Results of the Stereotyping of the Colonizers and the Colonized

The common practice of 'grouping' individuals into one neat category, manifested in the belief that "they" all look the same, act the same, and are the same is helped along by emotional distance. Plurality is often only possible through the expansion of the single 'grouped' category into a few subcategories of 'types'. Through the application of either the grouping method or the typing method, both Colonizer and Colonized can fall under the false impression that they understand and know one another. However, this kind of "knowledge" is dangerous because it is a static type of knowledge and there is often little that anyone can say or do to change the parameters that these definitions are based on. By employing such a method the Colonizers and the Colonized are satisfied that they have assessed each other accurately and, even if they find the conclusions they draw about one another disappointing, they are satisfied to continue believing them.

Problematization of These Stereotypes

Although Forster employs the grouping method in order to define the Colonizers as one definite 'type' and as an initial means of understanding India, he simultaneously points out the perils in doing so and the merit in not doing so through several characters in A Passage to India. Fielding, for example, does not fit in with the other Brits he encounters in India. He believes that people should get to know one another through one on one conversations and experiences rather than classifying one another as members of opposing groups. By doing away with affiliations, he believes that individuals have a better chance of understanding one another:

> He had no racial feeling – not because he was superior to his brother civilians, but because he had matured in a different atmosphere, where the herd-instinct does not flourish. The remark that did him most harm at the Club was a silly aside to the effect that the so-called white races are really pinko-gray. […]

> The pinko-gray male whom he addressed was subtly scandalized; his sense of insecurity was awoken, and he communicated it to the rest of the herd. (A Passage to India 57)

The simile of the Club members as a "herd" lends them an air of animalistic primitiveness with an emphasis on the follower mentality. This "herd" acts and thinks as a unit bound by solidarity, yet they are likened with animals so the reader is forced to mistrust any conclusion the herd might come to. The fact that Fielding is clearly not part of the herd automatically gives him credibility in the eyes of the Indians in the novel and the reader, yet his British compatriots mistrust him because of this. He is human, while they are animals; he uses logic and experience to form his opinions, while they rely on impulse and pride. Bound by membership and affiliation with the Club, the British characters in the novel can knowingly live in state of conscious ignorance to the realities of the Indian society surrounding them: "[…T]he Club moved slowly; it still declared that few Mohammedans and no Hindus would eat at an Englishman's table, and that all Indian ladies were in impenetrable purdah. Individually it knew better; as a club it declined to change" (A Passage to India 60). Association with the Club seems to get in the way of individual thinking and perpetuates the reliance upon stereotypes to inform ones thinking. In A Passage to India Fielding sides with Aziz at first, as a result of his instinctual initial emotional proximity to Aziz. After being informed by Mr Turton of Adela's accusation against Aziz of assault in the Marabar caves, Fielding's first instinct is to come to Aziz's defense: "'I cannot believe that Dr Aziz is guilty.' […] 'I make no reflection on the good faith of the two ladies, but the charge they are bringing against Aziz rests upon some mistake, and five minutes will clear it up. The man's manner is perfectly natural; besides, I know him to be incapable of infamy'" (A Passage to India 153). However, in taking Aziz's side, Fielding isolates himself from the other British

characters in the novel. For them Fielding's insistence that Aziz is innocent is indicative of Fielding's disloyalty to his own people.

The British believe themselves to be more civilized and superior to the Indians, however in a discussion on the topic of whether the English can be trusted or not, Mahmoud Ali reveals to Hamidullah that Mrs Turton has been known to take bribes in the past:

> 'Did you not know that when they were lent to Central India over a canal scheme some rich rajah or other gave her a sewing machine in solid gold so that the water should run through his state?' 'And does it?' 'No, that is where Mrs Turton is so skilful. When we poor blacks take bribes, we perform what we are bribed to perform, and the law discovers us in consequence. The English take and do nothing.' (A Passage to India 10)

It is impossible to know if Mrs Turton actually took the bribe, or if the entire scenario even actually occurred, but the important thing is that the men think it did and that they draw on it to support their conclusion that Westerners, especially Western women, cannot be trusted. Assuming that the incident did occur, within the realm of the fictional setting depicted, it is a perfect example of the shameless, thoughtless manner in which the Western female characters treat the Eastern male characters.

Conclusion

In A Passage to India distance is the enabling factor that fuels the power dichotomy between the Colonizer and the Colonized and the East and the West. In addition, it also necessitates the reliance upon stereotypes as a means of understanding people and places. Forster recognized that in order to know and understand a place and its inhabitants one must eliminate the distance between oneself and the subject of interest. His efforts to try to get to know India were aided by his friendship with Syed Ross Masood, whom he had met in

England (A Passage to India x). Through his connection with Masood, Forster experienced personally one of the fundamental benefits of forging a personal relationship with a native of another country. This interpersonal proximity enabled him to gain up-close access to a wealth of information and experiences that would have otherwise been unavailable to him. It is also through interpersonal proximity that the foundation for cross-cultural understanding is laid. Without his personal connection to Masood, Forster had been forced to rely on the faint, Eurocentrically-tainted, stereotypical impressions he had inadvertently gathered along the way. His initial lack of interest in India stemmed from his belief that he already 'knew' India. His close interpersonal exposure with Indians, aided by Masood, allowed him to realize that his initial summation of India was not a reflection of the true India as seen by an insider.

Through Forster's experience in seeing the 'truth' about India unfold before him, it is apparent that 'truth' is not a fixed entity. In the case of imperial India, there are at least three versions of the truth: that of the Europeans' impression of India gained from afar, that of the Europeans' impression of India gained through close, interpersonal contact (like Forster's), and that of the impression that Indians have of India and themselves. To 'know' India through stereotypes is to know it in one sense that is completely different from knowing India through first-hand, interpersonal experiences. The difference is proximity. Both experiences of India are valid in terms of reflecting the truth as interpreted by the respective viewer, but the closer one gets physically, socially, personally, and emotionally to the actual subjects the closer the interpretation comes to reflecting how the subjects view themselves.

Colonization not only dehumanizes the Colonizer but also dehumanizes the Colonized. The conception of the Orient, not as a place but as a concept or ideal, is based on the misinterpretation or misconception of the East by the West. The British depicted in A Passage to India use this Westernized fantasy construction of the Orient as a weapon against

the East in order to gain power over them. Aziz tries to make the British see him as an equal, yet this proves to be impossible – not because he is not their equal, but rather because the British are not familiar enough with the Indian culture to recognize his efforts. Aziz is never given the chance to wield the West's disparity in knowledge of the East against them, though. Even when the assault charges against him are dropped, he is still powerless. Aziz demonstrates his acute understanding of Westerners while the British, on the other hand, demonstrate their complete ignorance of the Indian subjects. This ignorance serves as the crux of the novel as exemplified through Ronny, Turton, and Callendar. If they had not been so physically, socially, and emotionally distant from the Indian people and their culture, they would have known, as all the Indian characters in the novel know, that Aziz could not have assaulted Adela in the Marabar Caves. Their maintenance of distance from the Indians is ironic in that it is their job to act as liaisons between the East and the West by gathering intelligence on the Indians. This intelligence that they provide serves as the foundation for relations between the East and the West in that it steers the West's course in terms of how they handle the East. However, with a foundation built on stereotypes, dehumanization, distance, misinterpretations, and misinformation, it is no wonder that problems arise between the East and the West.

Chapter Three

Power, Distance, and Stereotyping between Male and female characters in A Passage to India

Introduction

> The construction of the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference – racial and sexual. Such an articulation becomes crucial if it is held that the body is always simultaneously (if conflictually) inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power. (Bhabha 67)

Just as Colonized individuals are subjected to domination and marginalization on the part of the Colonizers, women have traditionally been the victims of the same fate by the hand of the male colonizing figures in their lives. If it is accepted that the universal cultural center is presumed by Westerners to originate from the West, it must also be acknowledged that the creators and perpetuators of this ideology have historically been men. This assumption can be made based on the fact that imperialism and colonialism were endeavors located in the political realm of which women have not been welcome until relatively recently. The traditional exclusion of women from creating, defining, and even being constituents of the cultural center (as reflected by the male-dominated fields of literature, science, theology, and art, among other fields), is evidence of their marginalization and distance from the cultural center: "The (political) economy of the masculine and of the feminine is organized by different requirements and constraints, which, when socialized and metaphorized, produce signs, relationships of power, relationships of production and of reproduction, an entire immense system of cultural inscription readable as masculine or feminine" (Cixous qtd. in

Modern Criticism and Theory 266). Notions of masculinity and femininity are complicated in that they do not always denote a person's physical sex: A man can be feminine and a woman can be masculine. However, a power hierarchy is tied to the notions of masculinity and femininity. In this chapter I will examine the relationships between male and female characters and analyze the rolls that the female characters fulfill in order to show how distance fuels the power dichotomy between men and women in A Passage to India and how distance necessitates the reliance upon stereotypes as a means of understanding people and places in the novel.

Power Hierarchies in A Passage to India

A power hierarchy exists between male and female characters in A Passage to India. This seems to be culture-specific, where Western male characters reign over Western female characters and Eastern male characters reign over Eastern female characters. However, this pattern is disrupted when the two cultures collide. When that happens, Western female characters, in addition to Western male characters, are depicted as holding power over both Eastern male characters and Eastern female characters.

The British female characters are marginalized by their British male counterparts. Even though the British female characters have limited power, they are active constituents in shaping the culture at the Club. This social limitation is marked by the physical limits of the gate around the Club, yet even here they are not in complete control, nor are they truly respected by the male characters. At one point Adela tries to engage Mr Turton in a conversation, but he obviously has no intention of hearing what she has to say: "She tried indeed to discuss this point with Mr Turton, but he silenced her with a good-humored motion of his hand, and continued what he had come to say" (A Passage to India 22). Although Mr Turton is not forceful or cruel towards Adela, he has no intention of listening to her and he

makes this clear by literally silencing her with a hand gesture. In doing so he expresses his opinion that Adela has nothing to say that is worth listening to.

Adela comes to realize later on that she does not fully understand the dynamics of British-Indian co-relations, but even when she expresses a desire to receive an explanation, she is denied it. This refusal on the part of the British characters to explain to Adela the social hierarchy that is in place between the British and the Indians in Chandrapore seems partly a result of the British characters' lack of awareness and partly a result of their lack of interest. They are inhibited by their ignorance and arrogance. In a conversation between Adela and Ronny where Adela presses Ronny to explain to her why there are double-standards for the behavior of Indians versus the British, Ronny states;

> 'It's different, it's different; you don't understand.' 'I know I don't, and I want to. What is the difference, please?' He wished she wouldn't interfere. His mother did not signify – she was just a globe-trotter, a temporary escort, who could retire to England with what impressions she chose. But Adela, who meditated spending her life in the country, was a more serious matter; it would be tiresome if she started crooked over the native question. Pulling up the mare, he said, 'There's your Ganges.' Their attention was diverted.
>
> (A Passage to India 27-28)

Ronny does not seem to be interested in or able to explain to Adela why the British need not show any respect towards the Indians while the Indians are required to show respect towards the British. Most likely, Ronny does not understand this system either, but in an effort to avoid appearing ignorant, and thus weak, he circumvents Adela's persistent questioning by emphasizing her ignorance, distracting her, and, thus, silencing her.

Even Mrs Moore, who is Ronny's mother and should therefore be respected by her son, is subjected to being silenced. When Mrs Moore points out to Ronny that he is being

unfair towards the Indians, Ronny becomes defensive: "'You never used to judge people like this at home.' 'India isn't home,' he retorted, rather rudely, but in order to silence her he had been using phrases and arguments that he had picked up from older officials, and he did not feel quite sure of himself" (A Passage to India 29). Rather than truly defending his standpoint with sound arguments, logic, or reason, Ronny instead resorts to clichés in order to silence his mother. In this example the third-person narrator likens the character of Ronny to a parrot or child who simply repeats things it has heard, without giving any thought to what is actually being said. Through this presentation of Ronny, the third-person narrator evokes a derogatory tone and attitude towards him that highlights the narrator's distance from Ronny. Because Ronny is incapable of supporting his own point, the only thing he can do is exercise his authority as a man to silence Mrs Moore. Thus, regardless of intellectual capabilities, men in A Passage to India are able to dominate and silence the women simply because they are men and the society they live in grants them this power and expects no less from them.

On another occasion Mrs Moore informs Ronny of Adela's reservations regarding India: "'She doesn't think [the Anglo-Indians] behave pleasantly to Indians, you see.' 'What did I tell you?' he exclaimed, losing his gentile manner. 'I knew it last week. Oh, how like a woman to worry about a side-issue!'" (A Passage to India 45). Two things are interesting about Ronny's statement: First, he sees civility, or lack thereof, towards Indians as a "side-issue"; second, he scorns this sentiment as a product of the female rationale. In the male-dominated microcosm he inhabits, the most important thing is performing one's job as an act of duty towards one's country. In his world, the end justifies the means, and it is seen as feminine and therefore weak to sympathize with the natives or give in to any sort of feeling towards them as people. This variant of consequentialism based on the false premise of the British being superior to the Indians is ethically unstable. Not only does it negate the underlying message of the entire novel that sympathy and understanding are desirable

attributes, but it also highlights the disapproving attitude of the third-person narrator toward Ronny. The more ironic treatment Ronny is given by the third-person narrator, the more the narrator (and Forster as the implied author) distance themselves from Ronny in admonition.

Just as the British male characters exercise power over the British female characters, Indian male characters exercise power over Indian female characters. One such example is that of Hamidullah and his wife. After the discussion on marriage with Hamidullah's wife, Hamidullah Begum, supplemented by anecdotes and persuasive rhetoric in which she brings up the question of his own status as a bachelor, Aziz is left feeling despondent and Hamidullah steps in: "[… S]eeing that his young relative looked worried he added a few soothing words, and thus wiped out any impression that his wife might have made" (A Passage to India 12). The significance of this quote lies in the fact that the impression made through all of Hamidullah Begum's stories, arguments, and persuasive words, summoned in order to convince Aziz that he should marry again, is so easily erased after only a few brief words to the contrary from her husband. The case that she had so skillfully, patiently, and laboriously built in order to persuade Aziz amounts to nothing once her husband contradicts her, even though his contradiction only amounts to "a few soothing words". Thus, she is silenced by her husband just as the British women are silenced by British men in the novel.

Eastern men in A Passage to India seem to adhere to the notion of Eastern women as being born to be wives and mothers. While speaking with Hamidullah Begum on the topic of marriage, Hamidullah and Aziz come to the joint conclusion that "[…] better polygamy almost, than that a woman should die without the joys God has intended her to receive. Wedlock, motherhood, power in the house – for what else is she born, and how can the man who has denied them to her stand up to face her creator and his own at the last day?" (A Passage to India 12). The men agree that it is a man's duty to marry in order to emancipate women from the pitiful, in their view, existence as an unwed female. The fate of the women

is dictated entirely by the men. The women can be granted or "denied" the privilege of being married to a man, but in the end it is the men who control the situation. However, the men seem to believe it to be shameful to actually deny a woman "the joys God had intended her to receive" and they seem to have a real fear of the consequences in the afterlife as a result of that denial. This citation makes it very clear that the realm in which the Indian female characters exist is very narrow and the roles they are permitted to hold are limited to those of wife and mother. When it comes to "power in the house", it is unclear what this alludes to, since the reader has just been informed on the previous page that women must wait to eat after the men, even in the privacy of their own home. It is likely that the only power an Indian woman in the novel has is over the servants and her children.

Western female characters, in addition to Western male characters, are depicted as holding power over both Eastern male characters and Eastern female characters. One way in which this is achieved is through the appropriation of 'the gaze'. In colonial and postcolonial settings, the gaze is used by the colonists in order to establish power and drive imperialism. Since men have traditionally been the primary agents in the process of colonization, as discussed in Chapter two of this thesis, they have also traditionally been the ones performing the gazing. However, the gaze is something that is easily appropriated by those who have been the subjects of the colonial gaze as it requires no knowledge of the Colonizer's language, yet still aides the marginalized in expressing their discontent as they gaze back in defiance at the colonists. In A Passage to India, Forster's treatment of imperialism is nuanced. Through the third-person narrator, he demonstrates the appropriation of the gaze on behalf of the colonizing male British characters and the Colonized male Indian characters. Likewise, he also depicts male and female characters from both cultural backgrounds using the gaze against one another. When confronted with greeting a group of Indian women, Mrs Turton states to Mrs Moore and Adela at the bridge party; "'You're superior to them,

anyway. Don't forget that. You're superior to everyone in India except one or two of the ranis, and they're on an equality'" (A Passage to India 38). Even though they are not men, the Western female characters are able to yield power over the Easterners through the practice of the male gaze, which signifies dominance and suppression, due to the fact that they are members of the dominant, white, Western society. Their whiteness grants them the power to gaze and, in turn, control the Easterners. In a colonial context the male gaze is ultimately symbolic of an extension and exertion of imperial power; in a multicultural context it is symbolic of an extension and exertion of white power. In a feigned effort to welcome the Indian women to the bridge party, Mrs Turton "[…] said a few words of welcome in Urdu. She had learned the lingo, but only to speak to her servants, so she knew none of the politer forms, and of the verbs only the imperative mood" (A Passage to India 38). Normally, when addressing native people in their native land, it is considered polite to speak to them in their language, rather than taking the self-centered view that they should speak the language of the visitor. However, Mrs Turton's decision to address the women in Urdu is not driven by politeness but rather arrogance. If politeness was her aim, she would have taken the time to learn how to properly speak to the women in a polite manner. Instead, her "words of welcome" are delivered in a series of rude commands.

Distance and Power

The above examples of the marginalization of British female characters by British male characters and Indian female characters by Indian male characters are highlighted as general examples of the power hierarchy that exists in the novel between male and female characters. Specific types of distance fuel this power hierarchy. The three types of distance relevant to this discussion are emotional distance, physical distance, and social distance.

Emotional Distance

Emotional distance, which is defined in the introduction of this thesis as the inability to sympathize with someone of a different race or sex, is evident throughout A Passage to India. There is a clear lack of emotional proximity between the British women and the Indian men in the novel. An example of this in A Passage to India occurs when Aziz's carriage is taken by two British women: "Both were ladies. Aziz lifted his hat. The first, who was in an evening dress, glanced at the Indian and turned instinctively away. 'Mrs Lesley, it *is* a tonga,' she cried. 'Ours?' inquired the second, also seeing Aziz, and doing likewise. 'Take the gifts the gods provide, anyhow,' she screeched, and both jumped in" (A Passage to India 14). The women do not question whether the carriage is Aziz's or not because they do not care. Their status as British and Aziz's status as Indian means that they do not need to care either, as Aziz is virtually powerless against them. They are completely emotionally indifferent to Aziz.

Another example of emotional distance between male and female characters in A Passage to India occurs when Aziz tries to hide the fact that he is upset by Adela's question of whether he has more than one wife: "He did not like to remember Miss Quested's remark about polygamy, because it was unworthy of a guest, so he put it from his mind, and with it the knowledge that he had bolted into a cave to get away from her" (A Passage to India 148). By allowing himself to be overcome by his emotions Aziz loses control of himself and runs off, leaving Adela alone in the caves. She becomes frightened, overwhelmed, and confused and all of this leads to her false accusation of Aziz. By running off in an effort to try to conceal his emotions upon Adela's remark, Aziz creates an emotional gulf between himself and Adela and this emotional distance leads directly to the chaos that ensues.

Physical Distance

Physical distance between male and female characters, which refers to the space between concrete locations in A Passage to India, can be seen in where the male and female characters spend their time. The Western male characters spend their days at work, while the Western female characters visit one another at home, where they spend their time. Mrs Moore and Adela, who are interested in sight-seeing upon their arrival, are an exception to this, but their goals of socializing and leisure are the same as the other British women in the novel. This can be seen through the characters of Ronny and Adela. At one point, they are eating together after deciding not to call off the engagement: "Later on they spoke of passing events, and Ronny reviewed and recounted the day from his own point of view. It was a different day from the women's, because, while they had enjoyed themselves or thought, he had worked" (A Passage to India 87). Women in the novel represent pleasure, leisure, and enjoyment while the men represent work, commitment, and duty. It is interesting to note that the quoted sentence is constructed to give the reader the impression that thinking and working are two opposite things and that Ronny does not think; he works. Thus, the social and physical realms of male and female characters and what is expected of each, even when both are from the West, are separate.

Many of the Eastern women depicted in the novel spend their time hidden away from society in purdah. They sit behind a screen when male visitors are in their home, in order to not be seen by them, and many of them remain veiled in public so as not to allow other men to look at them. When Aziz comes to call at Hamidullah's house, he is invited to visit with his wife: "'Come and see my wife a little, then,' said Hamidullah, and they spent twenty minutes behind the purdah" (A Passage to India 11). In this context, the husband exercises power over his wife in deciding who he allows in her presence. She is not free to choose her own company, nor is she free to reject company he brings to her. In being female she is powerless in this sense. Thus, the physical barriers of screen and veil are used by the male

characters to exercise their power over the women in the setting depicted in A Passage to India.

Social Distance

Social distance, which denotes a difference in customs and practices, is evident between Western women and Eastern men throughout the novel. In particular, it is evident when Nawab Bahadur finds Ronny and Adela sitting under a tree and greets them: "'How do you do?' said Adela, likewise pulling herself together. She held out her hand. The old gentleman judged from so wanton a gesture that she was new to his country, but he paid little heed. Women who exposed their faces became by that one act so mysterious to him that he took them at the valuation of their menfolk rather than at his own" (A Passage to India 79). The social customs of either side are so foreign to the other that they serve as a barrier between them in this case. Adela, as a newcomer, does not realize that she has committed a faux pas by extending her hand to an Indian man, and Nawab Bahadur sees this as a sign that she is new. It is interesting to note that Nawab Bahadur sees an unveiled woman as being "mysterious", as this is in stark contrast to what a Westerner would view as mysterious. For a Westerner, anything hidden behind a veil or curtain would be deemed mysterious because it literally cannot be seen. It is not Adela's face that is mysterious but rather the custom of exposing the female face in public that is mysterious to him.

Social distance exists even between Western female characters and Eastern female characters in A Passage to India. The Western women's affiliation with the Western men grants them similar power to that of their male counterparts that they knowingly and unknowingly wield over the Indian characters in the novel. At the Bridge Party the Indian women seem unsure as to how to behave, since they are in unfamiliar territory with unfamiliar company in an unfamiliar social setting, so they do their best to mimic Adela,

hoping that this will please her: "Whatever she said produced a murmur of depreciation, varying into a murmur of concern when she dropped her pocket-handkerchief. She tried doing nothing, to see what that produced, and they too did nothing" (A Passage to India 39). Adela finds herself frustrated when she is unable to converse with the Indian women. The Indian women's insecurity and lack of initiative in this situation points to the fact that they are uncertain about how the British women expect them to behave and so they try to show respect by being complaisant. This also is a testament to the amount of power Adela, as a Western woman, has over the Indian women. Even though they know nothing about Adela, the Indian women strive to please her simply because she is a member of the British ruling class. It is precisely this power that gets in her way in trying to establish social connections with the Indian women: "Miss Quested now had her desired opportunity; friendly Indians were before her, and she tried to make them talk, but she failed, she strove in vain against the echoing walls of their civility" (A Passage to India 39). Forster's choice in wording here is interesting when he describes Adela as trying "to make them talk"; this presentation of Adela through the filter of the third-person narrator lends the scene an air of force. It is almost as if Adela is likened to a child taunting an animal with a stick or forcing a pet monkey to dance. She is trying to elicit a response out of these women on command but, due to the artificiality of the whole situation and the power that she unknowingly has over the Indian women, she is unable to achieve this. The narrator's presentation of Adela's crude failed attempt to connect with the Indian women is full of irony and highlights the narrator's attitudinal distance from Adela.

Dehumanization as a Lead-in to Stereotypes

In A Passage to India many female characters are dehumanized on a narrative level in that they are essentially invisible within the discourse of the novel. Two examples of such

women are Aziz's wife and Fielding's wife. These women are invisible, and thus dehumanized, as they are never fully revealed to the reader through their own actions or thoughts. On the contrary, the only access the reader is granted to these women is through the thoughts and words of male characters. In this sense, these women exist only through their male counterparts.

The reader's only access to Aziz's wife is through Aziz's memories and impressions of her. As a character, she seems to function merely as an entity that serves to add to the overall depth of the character of Aziz, as it is through his musings about her that the reader discovers that he has been a family man with a wife and children. Although Aziz seems to reject the idea of arranged marriage in favor of a Western approach of falling in love with someone of one's own choosing before marrying them, it is the loyalty and self-sacrifice of his late wife that eventually won him over: "He was won by her love for him, by a loyalty that implied something more than submission […] She became the mother of a son… and in giving him a second son she died" (A Passage to India 50). As far as the reader is made aware, Aziz's wife only existed to serve him. She loved him loyally, even though he did not love her, and the circumstances of her death are described in a way that make it seem like she sacrificed her own life in order to "give" Aziz the cherished gift of a second son.

The aforementioned concept of the 'male gaze' is significant here as well. In general, the one who gazes is the one who is in power and is able to exercise control over the subject of the gaze. In this context the concept of the gaze is expanded through the introduction of the photograph of Aziz's wife. In this case she is not knowingly a performer because she is dead and all that remains of her to be gazed upon is her photograph: "And, unlocking a drawer, he took out his wife's photograph. He gazed at it, and tears spouted from his eyes. […T]he more he looked at this photograph the less he saw" (A Passage to India 51). To gaze at something implies a certain intangibility. Aziz's wife is lost to him forever because she is

dead, and no matter how much he gazes at her picture she will never materialize for him. At the same time, the picture serves as a very concrete metaphor for the superficiality of the gaze. The photo is a representation of a person but it will never add up to the person it depicts. Similarly, to gaze upon something implies a distance between the gazing subject and the object of the gaze. In Aziz's case of gazing upon the photo of his late wife, the distance implied is temporal, since the picture depicts his wife frozen in the past. The empty space created between subject and object occludes the possibility for the gazer to gather anything more than a superficial, and thus, inaccurate impression of the object of his or her gaze. Thus, Aziz's wife is not presented as an independent, thinking, feeling character. On the contrary, she is essentially invisible within the discourse of the novel and the only impression of her the reader is granted is through Aziz's distorted retrospective memory of her.

Distance and Stereotypes in A Passage to India—

Stereotyping of Male and Female Characters

The dehumanization of female characters through the presentation of them as invisible in A Passage to India gives way to the stereotyping of women as entities who exist merely to support their male counterparts. The stereotyping is perpetuated by the male characters in A Passage to India. "*A Passage to India* is hard on women. It portrays them unfavorably—as shrewish harpies, silly gigglers, confused spinsters, and cranky old ladies; it accords them only one outlet, marriage, for meaning and value within a patriarchal system, and then it persistently undermines that outlet" (Hubel 351). This statement, although overly harsh in its expression, is effective in conveying the point that women in A Passage to India are restricted to the confines of marriage, and it is only within this institution that they are able to exist as viable characters in the novel. When it comes to wives in the novel, the narrator

leads the reader to believe that there are 'good' wives and there are 'bad' wives. Good wives are those who aide their men in forging inter-racial friendships with other men and, thus, helping to unify the two nations and bad wives are those who stand in the way of this. Ironically, the only two female characters who fall into the category of 'good wives', Aziz's late wife and Fielding's wife, Stella, are flat, unspecified shadows of characters who exist on a plane outside the realm of the society depicted in the novel: "Beyond being a vague memory which Aziz calls up when he is feeling poetic, his wife has no autonomous existence in the story" (Hubel 353). These women have no active part in influencing the narrative; it is simply the idea of them that is used by their husbands in an effort to bond with other men, much like boys trading baseball cards or old men sharing war-stories. In this sense, these women are powerless. This claim is supported by the fact that there is no instance in the novel of female characters using male characters in the same manner in order to elevate their position or bond with one another.

Like the Orientalist ideal of India, the intangibility of these invisible women lends them their allure. Conversely, the wives who are firmly planted in a tangible sense within the narrative, the wives of the British officials, seem to exist within the novel only to get in the way of the unifying of the nations: "The female characters in the novel who refuse to be silenced earn the resentment of their men and the narrator's disapproval as well. These are the Anglo-Indian wives, and they are the characters we are least encouraged to like" (Hubel 354). By presenting 'invisible' female characters in a positive light and visible female characters in a negative light, Forster is able to convey the message that it is possible that women can help men forge inter-racial bonds, but it is unlikely that this will happen.

The overall presentation of male and female characters in A Passage to India supports the traditional, now antiquated, Western stereotype of men as logical, calculated, dominant, strong, and informed while women are emotional, spontaneous, submissive, weak, and

uninformed: "The hierarchization [between men and women] subjects the entire conceptual organization to man. [It is a] male privilege, which can be seen in the opposition by which it sustains itself, between *activity* and *passivity*. Traditionally, the question of sexual difference is coupled with the same opposition: activity/ passivity" (Cixous qtd. in Modern Criticism and Theory 265). This opposition between 'activity' and 'passivity' can be seen again and again in A Passage to India. The male characters exist in the public realm of society and are generally portrayed through their actions, whereas the female characters exist in the private realm of the home and are generally portrayed through their thoughts. Ronny's embodiment of these stereotypes is seen through his position as a government official who strives to keep up appearances in order to build his professional and social reputations. Ronny is portrayed as a 'doer' rather than a 'thinker'. In contrast, Mrs Moore is much more a 'thinker' than a 'doer'. The reader gets to know Mrs Moore through her thoughts; she is much more introspective than the male characters. Adela also starts out as a 'thinker', but she causes a lot of trouble when she "loses her head" (*The Guardian Unlimited*) and stops thinking and starts acting on impulse instead, as seen in her false accusations towards Aziz.

How These Stereotypes Are Utilized by Male and Female Characters

Mrs Moore and Adela seem to break the pattern, as they are not wives to anyone. However, even Mrs Moore is sexualized at first by Aziz as he sees her in the dark shadows at the mosque upon their first encounter: "She was now in the shadow of the gateway, so that he could not see her face, but she saw his, and she said with a change of voice, 'Mrs Moore.' 'Mrs —' Advancing, he found that she was old. A fabric bigger than the mosque fell to pieces, and he did not know whether he was glad or sorry" (A Passage to India 17-18). Once he realizes that she is an old woman he is disappointed, although it is precisely her age that exempts her from the sexual realm and enables her to establish a friendship with Aziz:

> Initially Mrs Moore appears to be somebody who will disrupt the pattern [of wives as obstacles or conduits for inter-racial male friendships], for she is a woman who maintains a friendship with an Indian man independently of the Englishmen around her. […] But Mrs Moore's descent into meaninglessness, which turns her into a cranky and petulant old woman, removes her from the stage of inter-racial friendship altogether. (Hubel 355)

Mrs Moore's asexuality in the marriage-based context of the society depicted in A Passage to India liberates her and allows her to forge a friendship with Aziz, although she is not able to maintain this position for very long. The narrator points out to the reader several times that Mrs Moore is getting old and is in poor health and so on, until she finally just disappears into nothingness: "Dead she was – committed to the deep while still on the southward track […] Somewhere about the Suez there is always a social change: the arrangements of Asia weaken and those of Europe begin to be felt, and during the transition Mrs Moore was shaken off" (A Passage to India 241). Mrs Moore's death is completely unceremonious, considering her importance as one of the most complex characters in the novel. This abrupt, casual treatment of Mrs Moore's death on the part of the third-person narrator is striking because it is so uncharacteristic in terms of the narrator's treatment of her up to that point. The irony of Mrs Moore's unceremonious death, in light of her significance as one of the most important, developed round characters in the novel is underscored even more in that it is the first time in the novel that the narrator subjects Mrs Moore to ironic treatment. Just as the presence of irony surrounding Ronny signals narrative distance between the narrator and Ronny, the absence of ironic treatment of Mrs Moore by the narrator signals a lack of narrative distance. The lack of irony attached to Mrs Moore on the part of the third-person narrator, and Forster as the implied author, is indicative of the narrative proximity between the narrator and Mrs Moore. The narrator's sympathetic treatment of her prior to her death signals to the reader

that Mrs Moore is a character worth respecting and that the narrator's own values are in line with hers. Mrs Moore is one of the few characters who demonstrate the ability to think logically while still being able to empathize with other human beings. The narrator also emphasizes Mrs Moore's lack of arrogance, her honesty, and her willingness to meet with the Indians on their terms, all of which are attributes that set her apart from nearly all of the other British characters in the novel. Forster's decision to kill Mrs Moore and the narrator's laconic presentation of her death signals a lack of hope in the novel. The message seems to be that there is no room for people who are capable of thinking and feeling in the society depicted in A Passage to India, and thus, the world is a harsh place ruled by emotionally-stunted fools like Ronny. Aside from his own guilt of behaving badly during their final encounter, Ronny seems relieved to have her out of the way, even though she was his own mother. Likewise, Ronny expresses a desire to be rid of Adela too: "And Adela – she would have to depart too, he hoped she would have made the suggestion herself ere now. He really could not marry her – it would mean the end of his career" (A Passage to India 243). Because Mrs Moore and Adela are unable to fill the role of a sexual object (i.e. wife), there is no place for them in the society depicted in the novel. Furthermore, both Mrs Moore and Adela resist taking a passive role in India and prove this through their questioning of norms there. Literary critic, Hélène Cixous, argues that "[i]n philosophy, woman is always on the side of passivity. […] Either the woman is passive; or she doesn't exist" (Cixous qtd. in Modern Criticism and Theory 265). This applies to Mrs Moore and Adela in A Passage to India in that there is no room for them in the society depicted in India as non-passive women. The character of Mrs Moore is gotten rid of first by her departure by sea and finally by her death, and Adela, whose status as active rather than passive culminates with her false accusation of Aziz after the trip to the Marabar caves, is ostracized and shipped back home.

Like Mrs Moore, Adela is also an outsider from the start in terms of how she fits into the group of other female characters depicted in the novel. Her status as Ronny's fiancée places her in a sort of limbo between being a wife and a single woman:

> Although she is not a wife, Adela functions like so many female characters in *A Passage to India*, as a conduit or even a cipher. She provides the opportunity for Fielding and Aziz to meet and later the means through which their friendship is tested and strengthened. It is largely at her expense that they are friends at all, since in order for them to retain their friendship, her account of the event in the cave must be retracted. (Hubel 357)

Despite aiding the friendship between Fielding and Aziz, Adela fails to connect with other characters in the novel. Her two missions in India, to see if she can connect with Ronny in order to proceed with the marriage and to connect with Indians while in India, fail completely. Her failed ventures in the novel may be linked to the very autonomy that gives her the freedom to attempt to achieve these goals. She is autonomous as an unmarried woman, but her lack of sexual attractiveness precludes her from being able to exercise any power. When meeting Mrs Moore and Adela for tea at Fielding's house, Aziz reflects on this: "Beauty would have troubled him, for it entails rules of its own, but Mrs Moore was so old and Miss Quested so plain that he was spared this anxiety" (A Passage to India 62). The fact that neither Mrs Moore nor Adela are portrayed as sexually desirable, the one being too old and the other too plain, works in their favor in that these attributes serve to disarm the men they encounter. This lack of sexual charge helps to neutralize their relationships with men in the novel, yet the fact that they are women gets in the way of their total success in connecting with the men. Likewise, Mrs Callendar and Mrs Lesley are also described in a way that presents them as physically unattractive, thus detracting from the power they are able to yield over Indian males. After having his carriage taken from him by the two women,

Aziz reflects: "The inevitable snub – his bow ignored, his carriage taken. It might have been worse, for it comforted him somehow that Mesdames Callendar and Lesley should both be fat and weigh the tonga down behind. Beautiful women would have pained him" (A Passage to India 15). The women's lack of beauty lessons the sting of the blow they inflict on Aziz. Thus, although their status as Imperial, white British women enables them to treat Aziz as they like, both in seeing him and choosing to ignore him, their lack of physical beauty diminishes their power.

"Everywhere and in all things, [men] define women's function and social role, and the sexual identity they are, or are not, to have" (Irigary qtd. in Modern Criticism and Theory 415). This applies to A Passage to India in that although women are defined by their gender in A Passage to India and limited to the roles of wives, fiancés, and relatives of the Western men, Adela uses her womanhood, despite her plainness, as a weapon to manipulate, conquer, and punish Aziz when she accuses him of assaulting her in the Marabar Caves. In the framework of the Western society depicted in the novel, the only power women have is gained through sexual relations, or supposed sexual relations in this case, with their male counterparts. Adela succumbs to the primitiveness that is inside her and is possessed by the "fight or flight" response upon becoming frightened inside the caves. Early in the novel she set out trying to discover the "real" India, and Aziz was supposed to be her means of accessing the "real" India. When she becomes overwhelmed by what she discovers there (all the cross-cultural confusion, misunderstandings, obstacles, resistance, and prejudice initially on the part of the British, and subsequently on the part of the Indians as a result of this) her animal instinct is to "fight" instead of retreating back home to England. Adela starts behaving like Ronny and begins to act without thinking. Her fabricated tale of what went on in the Marabar Caves between herself and Aziz is in line with what the West desires to believe and expects from an 'Oriental' male. She is in a state of confusion when she

communicates her story of assault perpetrated by Aziz, and then when she retracts her accusation and tries to clear Aziz's name she is ostracized: "Poor lamentable Adela… She remained at Government College, by Fielding's courtesy – unsuitable and humiliating, but no one would receive her at the Civil Station" (A Passage to India 243). As despicable as Adela's behavior is in this case, she herself becomes a victim. Although she tries to rectify the situation in having Aziz's name cleared, the damage to both of their reputations proves to be irreparable.

Results of Gender Stereotyping

Adela embodies the traditional stereotype of women as sexual, illogical, emotional creatures as seen through her false accusation of Aziz. None of her male British counterparts question her accusation because they already see her as a sexually vulnerable thing, and it doesn't even occur to them that Aziz does not see her in this way. As Aziz comments upon meeting Adela at Fielding's house for tea; "Adela's angular body and the freckles on her face were terrible defects in his eyes, and he wondered how God could have been so unkind to any female form. His attitude towards her remained entirely straightforward in consequence" (A Passage to India 62). An intellectually-based friendship between a man and a woman is beyond the comprehension of the British men. Men, on the other hand, are traditionally stereotyped as being purely logical and void of emotion. This can be seen through the character of Ronny who is unknowingly completely out of touch with his emotions; if he does have any emotions, the reader is not allowed access to them.

Problematization of These Stereotypes

Although the female characters in A Passage to India are routinely marginalized, both in the context of the society depicted in the novel and on a narrative level, Forster draws on them in

a few instances to continue his line of problematization of standard norms. One such example is the behavior of Hamidullah's wife:

> Hamidullah Begum was a distant aunt of Aziz, and the only female relative he had in Chandrapore, and she had much to say to him on this occasion about a family circumcision that had been celebrated with imperfect pomp. It was hard to get away, because until they had had their dinner she would not begin hers, and consequently prolonged her remarks in case they should suppose she was impatient. (A Passage to India 11)

The Indian women have lower social status than the Indian men in the novel and must put their own needs after those of their male counterparts. Although Hamidullah Begum is adhering to the expectations of her culture by waiting until after the men have had their share of food until she begins eating, her prolonging of the conversation before the men have had their dinner is interesting. She cannot be faulted in any way, as the narrator points out; her loquacity is explained to the reader as an act of patience and self-sacrifice, in an apparent effort to seem obedient and subservient to the men. However, regardless of what her actual intention is, in postponing her own dinner, she is also able to postpone the men's dinner. Thus, she is successful in manipulating the cultural conventions she must adhere to in order to exert power over the men

Another example of Forster's problematization of gender stereotypes in A Passage to India can be seen through his portrayal of Mrs Moore, through the third-person narrator, as the most intelligent character. By making the most intelligent character a woman, Forster goes against the stereotypical view of women as naive non-intellectuals. Another example of Forster's problematization of gender stereotypes in A Passage to India is his portrayal of Ronny who, as a male, is supposed to represent logic and reason, yet the reader is only granted access to Ronny through his actions, as he is seemingly void of any thoughts on a

deeper level. By portraying Ronny as a 'doer' rather than a 'thinker' Forster enforces the stereotype of men as perpetrators while dispelling the stereotype of men as thinkers and master-planners. Even though Ronny is a 'doer', he does not seem to ever accomplish anything other than maintaining the status quo. The result is an unflattering portrayal of an imperial male who acts before he thinks, making him appear to be rash, impetuous, and careless. Forster uses Aziz as a contrast to the traditional stereotype of the stoic male. The reader is given access to Aziz's emotions throughout the novel, including his mourning of the loss of his wife, his embarrassment over the standard of his living situation, and his fear and shock upon being accused of assaulting Adela.

Ironically, although the female characters are generally characterized by their thoughts and the male characters are generally characterized by their actions, it is the two English visitors, Mrs Moore and Adela Quested, who provide the action of the story and propel the plot forward. This is just one of many examples of how Forster, through the third-person narrator, highlights conventional binary dichotomies and then problematizes them by turning them upside-down.

Within the British society depicted in A Passage to India, marriage would enable Ronny to climb the social and professional ladder. Ronny's incapability to woo Adela and persuade her to marry him is symbolic of his lack of stereotypical Western male power, which has a parallel correlation to virility. Ronny's success in procuring a wife would be seen by his comrades as evidence of his 'manliness' and would therefore, in their eyes, signify his ability to perform his job well: "In *A Passage to India*, wives, or at least 'good' wives, seem to exist to further the friendship between husbands and the ties between nations" (Hubel 353). However, Ronny's inability to express himself verbally jeopardizes his engagement to Adela: After Ronny and Adela conclude that they will not be getting married to one another, but that they will remain friends, they seem closer and more intimate than

ever before in the novel: "As soon as they had exchanged this admission, a wave of relief passed through them both, and then transformed itself into a wave of tenderness, and passed back. […] Of course they were friends, and for ever. 'Do you know what the name of that green bird up above us is?' she asked, putting her shoulder rather nearer to his" (A Passage to India 78). The prospect of romance between Ronny and Adela had been getting between them all along and had been stifling their friendship. They are able to feel more tenderness and demonstrate more intimacy with one another as friends than they ever could as bride and groom-to-be. Although Adela never succeeds in engaging Ronny in a conversation about their ended engagement, the discussion continues on another level through their mutual initiation of physical contact with one another: "Ronny instructed the chauffeur to take the Marabar road rather than the Gangavati, since the latter was under repair, and settled himself down beside the lady he had lost" (A Passage to India 80). It is ironic that Ronny feels that he has "lost" Adela when she is sitting right next to him. Of course, he realizes that the loss has taken place on an emotional level, and all that is left between them is that which exists on a physical level. Adela seizes this opportunity to communicate with him in a manner that he is comfortable with, namely through physical actions rather than through words.

The following quotes from A Passage to India demonstrate how this non-verbal communication between Ronny and Adela continues:

> Her hand touched his, owning to a jolt, and one of the thrills so frequent in the animal kingdom passed between them, and announced that all their difficulties were only a lovers' quarrel. Each was too proud to increase the pressure, but neither withdrew it, and a spurious unity descended on them, as local and temporary as the gleam that inhabits a firefly. (A Passage to India 80)

"'I understand those big people are not particularly interesting,' said Adela quietly, disliking the young woman's tone. Her hand touched Ronny's again in the darkness, and to the animal thrill there was now added a coincidence of opinion" (A Passage to India 84).

> His hand, which he had removed to say goodbye, touched Adela's again; she caressed it definitely, he responded, and their firm and mutual pressure surely meant something. They looked at each other when they reached the bungalow, for Mrs Moore was inside it. It was for Miss Quested to speak, and she said nervously, 'Ronny, I should like to take back what I said on the maiden.' He assented, and they became engaged to be married in consequence. (A Passage to India 86)

Ronny is unable to express himself through words, and Adela fails, too, in managing to get him to do so. As a result of this, they are forced to communicate on a physical level through body language. Ironically, this silent "conversation", which covers the span of 8 pages in the novel and crosses through several scenes, is the longest conversation between any two characters in the entire novel. However, as soon as the matter is settled, Adela feels dissatisfied again at the lack of verbal communication between them: "Unlike the green bird or the hairy animal, she was labeled now. She felt humiliated again, for she deprecated labels, and she felt too that there should have been another scene between her lover and herself at this point, something dramatic and lengthy. He was pleased instead of distressed, he was surprised, but he had really nothing to say" (A Passage to India 86). By failing to engage Ronny in a verbal conversation about their relationship and then giving in to his nature and carrying out the "conversation" on a physical level, Adela sacrifices her own needs. Ronny is satisfied, as everything played out according to his terms, but Adela is left feeling empty. They have both failed; she fails to get emotional satisfaction from the relationship and he fails in fulfilling this need.

Ronny's engagement to Adela represents his supposed ability to conquer women sexually and grants him power on a professional level; conversely, his inability to convince her to marry him could be seen by his compatriots and colleagues as an act of submission and a metaphorical relinquishment of power to another man, making him appear weakened in their eyes. In this sense, the imperial and colonial settings can be seen as being based on a heterosexual model where the East is personified as a woman and the West as a man. Because the East is personified as a woman, by demonstrating that he has the potential to be sexually dominant over a woman, Ronny gives the impression that he also has the potential to dominate the East. Ronny essentially expresses this when he says to Adela and Mrs Moore; "'Look here, both of you, see India if you like and as you like – I know I made myself rather ridiculous at Fielding's, but… it's different now. I wasn't quite sure of myself'" (A Passage to India 86). Ronny's new-found confidence comes as a direct result of Adela making the decision to accept his marriage proposal. Until this point is confirmed, Ronny's ill-temper and arrogance is exacerbated as he is eager to prove to himself and his compatriots that he is capable of conquering the heart of a woman and, thus, is capable of conquering the Indians. The West's fabricated illusion of the East as weak, submissive, and delicate, facilitated by various types of distance, leads to the gain and eventual loss of power. In the colonial context depicted in A Passage to India, men who demonstrate sexual domination over women are seen as being more capable of controlling and dominating the East. On the contrary, female characters that are intelligent and have no husband to answer to, as exemplified by the character of Mrs Moore, are shown as having no place within the society depicted: "She was past marrying herself, even unhappily; her function was to help others, her reward to be informed that she was sympathetic. Elderly ladies must not expect more than this" (A Passage to India 87). Within the context of the novel, women are supposed to need men in

order to survive- just like the East is supposed to need the West in order to continue existing. Mrs Moore's death is symbolic of her inability to survive in this context.

Conclusion

In A Passage to India distance is the enabling factor that fuels the power dichotomy between male and female characters. In addition, it also necessitates the reliance upon stereotypes as a means of understanding people and places. Because women are dissimilar from men anatomically, they have traditionally been marginalized by male-dominated society. Throughout history, females have been judged by males on both a conscious and subconscious level as being weak, emotional, incapable, and illogical. Historically, this has been the basis for the exclusion of women from the theoretical, political, imperial, colonial, and cultural realms. In A Passage to India the exclusion of Western women from the cultural center is evident in their marginal roles as wives, fiancés, and relatives of the Western men, rather than as government officials who shape and perpetuate the Western culture across the East themselves: However, Western female characters, in addition to Western male characters, are depicted as holding power over both Eastern male characters and Eastern female characters. Even though they are not men, the Western women are able to yield power over the Easterners through their whiteness, which grants them the power to control the Easterners.

In A Passage to India many female characters are dehumanized on a narrative level in that they are essentially invisible within the discourse of the novel. The only access the reader is granted to these female characters is through the thoughts and words of male characters, making it clear that these women exist only through their male counterparts. Additionally, both Western female characters and Eastern female characters depicted in the novel are confined to roles of wives, mothers, and fiancées, furthering emphasizing their

existence as being solely determined through their relationships with men. The women are expected to lead a passive existence and leave the action to the men. As soon as the women try to take a more active role in the novel, as is illustrated through Mrs Moore and Adela, it is made clear that this is not acceptable within the society depicted. The chaos that ensues after Adela's accusations against Aziz after the trip to the Marabar caves, Mrs Moore's departure and eventual death, and Adela's ostracization and departure are all evidence of this. Because these women resist conforming to the stereotype of the passive female, they are rejected in the novel. The Western men in A Passage to India are expected to be the ones who take a more active role. Their actions are expressed through their professional positions and their professional standing is influenced through their sexual relationships with Western women.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

In the previous chapters of this thesis I hope to have shown that in A Passage to India distance is the enabling factor that fuels the power dichotomy between the West and the East, the Colonizer and the Colonized, and male and female characters. In addition, I hope to have demonstrated that distance leads to the reliance upon stereotypes as a means of understanding people and places in the novel.

In summary of the main points of chapter two of this thesis, the Western Colonizers and the Eastern Colonized in the novel segregate from one another when they can, as is exemplified through the physical layout of the society depicted, where the Westerners live on the high ground while the Indians live in the muddy lower region. This segregation can also be seen in how, where, and with whom the two parties choose to socialize. The Westerners seem to spend most, if not all, of their spare time socializing within the confines of the British social club grounds, where all Indians are forbidden entrance. When the two do have contact, it is usually in the context of a Western master/ Eastern servant relationship. The impression is given in the novel that all of the Westerners employ Indian house servants, and many of the British characters work alongside Indians in the courts and hospital, among other places. These forced contacts at home and at the office necessitate contact between the two parties, but they do not seem to lead to camaraderie and mutual understanding. Likewise, even at the Bridge Party that is arranged with the specific goal of bridging the gap between East and West, mutual understanding seems impossible. The reason for this is that, even though the British and Indian characters have ample opportunities to try and forge a respectful relationship with one another, neither party is able to fully understand the other because both rely on stereotypes that they have of the opposite party in order to 'know' them. In this way, members of each group dehumanize members of the other group. Dehumanization occurs

when members of either party begin to think of members of another party as sub-human objects, rather than thinking, feeling individuals. This results in a lack of empathy, feeling, and emotion from one party to the other. In A Passage to India this is clearly depicted through the character of Ronny who displays a dehumanized attitude towards the Indians, while also being dehumanized as a character by being made to seem robot-like in his inability to think for himself and his void of human emotions.

To summarize the main points of chapter three of this thesis, the men and women in the novel seem to live relatively separate lives. Although they live together, they spend their time doing completely different things and occupying different realms. The male characters are depicted as spending their days at work while the female characters spend their time at home (both their own homes and the homes of their female friends). Even at the Club where British male and female characters socialize together, they occupy different areas of the Club where women gravitate towards women and men gravitate towards men. The British male characters have, on the whole, a patronizing attitude towards female characters and they tend to rely on generalizations and stereotypes of women in order to 'understand' them. Although the British female characters are marginalized by their British male counterparts in the novel, these women hold a certain amount of power over Indian men that they encounter. The fact that the novel takes place in a colonial setting adds to the complexity of the inter-character dynamics and the power hierarchy that follows in that British male characters hold power over Indian male characters, Indian female characters, and British female characters; British female characters hold power over Indian male characters and Indian female characters; and Indian male characters hold power over Indian female characters. Like their male counterparts, the British female characters distance themselves emotionally from the Indian male and female characters they encounter and display a dehumanizing attitude towards them. The British female characters and the Indian female characters, in turn, are

dehumanized by their respective male counterparts, as is most evident in the existence of the 'invisible' female character of Aziz's wife. She is marginalized in the context of the novel to the extent that any access the reader is granted to her at all is always through the filter of Aziz. Thus, the depiction and revelation of her to the reader is always controlled by him and she is never granted the possibility of self-representation.

In chapters two and three of this thesis, I have aimed to show that the combination of distance and dehumanization leads to stereotypes. Stereotypes are used during times in which individuals find themselves in unfamiliar territory or in dealings with unfamiliar peoples. Consequently, the use of stereotypes also furthers people's reliance on them since the adherence to stereotypes prevents people from seeing the stereotyped 'others' as individuals. The use of generalizations in the form of stereotypes precludes one's ability to see people for who they really are.

After having summarized the main points in chapters two and three of this thesis, I am now in a position to make concluding points. The summary of the preceding chapters serves as the basis for my concluding statement and my concluding statements will refer back to my commentary of A Passage to India, rather than referring to the novel itself.

To my knowledge, no one within Forster criticism has used the concepts of distance and stereotyping in the way I discuss them. In Forster studies it is not usual to use a key term as the platform for an entire discussion, such as I do with the term 'distance'. The more conventional approach is to present a combination of questions that are based on a thematic concept, rather than to lay such emphasis on a single term, as I do here. However, in my initial formulation of the central questions regarding the role that distance plays in shaping stereotypes in A Passage to India, I hypothesized that it would be potentially interesting and critically rewarding to analyze this novel in this manner. I hope that I have clearly demonstrated that this initial hypothesis was correct and that distance is not only a key term

but is also a key concept that can help us understand important aspects of the novel. My focus on distance and stereotypes in this thesis has been critically productive in my analysis of A Passage to India in that it has paved the way for a discussion on perspective and characterization within the novel. My discussion of A Passage to India in the previous chapters of this thesis has highlighted the fact that there are numerous elements of distance and examples of stereotyping throughout the novel. I believe that distance is so interesting in regard to A Passage to India because it functions on both a spatial and temporal level where it is shown to be both concrete and metaphorical in the novel. I hope that I have been able to show that it is this transient quality of distance that elevates it beyond simply functioning as a key term and allows it to operate as a key concept in this thesis.

My combination of the three distinct theoretical standpoints of Postcolonial theory, Feminist theory, and Narrative theory linked to my key terms of distance and stereotyping in my analysis of A Passage to India is, to my knowledge, original. Although it may seem problematic to support a single argument with three different theoretical perspectives, my central focus on distance and stereotyping has allowed the three theories to complement one another in a way that aides me in building a strong argument. Furthermore, my combination of these three different theories justifies my reliance on key terms throughout this thesis, which helps to maintain an emphasis on the commonalities between the three theories. In addition to being a masterfully crafted work of fiction, it is remarkable how the thematic aspects of A Passage to India serve to link Post-colonial theory and Feminist theory. Both theoretical areas are concerned with the key features of power hierarchies, marginalization, domination, objectification, and difference in perspective - all of which are central elements of A Passage to India. In terms of Narrative theory, the narrative contribution of A Passage to India does not yet seem to have caught the full attention of the critics. I believe that this may be due to the novel's seemingly simple narration at first glance. This claim of the

novel's initial illusion of simplicity is echoed in Armstrong's previously mentioned critical study of A Passage to India. As stated in the introduction of this thesis, the main critical studies of A Passage to India have been within the areas of Modernism, Post-colonialism, and Feminism. However, I have found the application of Narrative theory in my analysis of A Passage to India fitting because of the clear delineation between flat and round characters, the multi-faceted nature of perspective in the novel, and the manner in which the third-person narrator operates. Even though Forster's presentation of flat and round characters in Aspects of the Novel was published three years after A Passage to India, it is clear that he relies on this type of characterization throughout the novel, making it a classic example of these narrative devices. In the previous chapters I have discussed how the narrator distances himself from the flat characters and shown how this distancing is highlighted through the use of irony throughout the text. I have given examples of the presence of irony in the novel, the characters connected to it, and I hope to have demonstrated that it is a key component of the problematization of norms evident in the novel. Forster's use of the form of a third-person narrator suggests to the reader that the narrative perspective will be stable, balanced, and predictable and lends the novel an air of conventionality. However, I hope that I have demonstrated in this thesis that A Passage to India is neither conventional nor stable, as is underscored through my discussion and analysis of many examples of problematization in the novel. Furthermore, in my discussion of the nuanced nature of the novel's third-person narrator that precedes this chapter I demonstrate how the instability of the third-person narrator in A Passage to India is linked to distance. This link shapes characterization, as previously mentioned in this chapter in the discussion of flat and round characters, and allows the narrator to distance himself from flat characters that he seems to disdain, such as Ronny, and position himself closer to round characters that he seems to admire, such as Mrs Moore. This partiality on the part of the narrator is further evidence of his instability.

Throughout this thesis I have connected distance to perspective and tried to show how the two are inextricably linked. Perspective is interesting in the novel because the reader is granted access through the narrator to the perspectives of men, women, Brits and Indians, which draws attention to the multi-faceted nature of perspective in the novel and has served as the basis for many of my points about power relations in this thesis. In terms of the interplay between perspective and power, I have found it useful to discuss the concept of gaze in the previous chapters of this thesis. In a colonial context the gaze is something that the Colonizers use against the Colonized in order to establish their superiority and drive imperialism. In a postcolonial context, the gaze is used by the colonized subjects against the Colonizers in order to express their discontent. In other words, the marginalized subjects are able to use the same metaphorical weapon that the Colonizers used on them in order to gaze back in defiance at the Colonizers. This reciprocal nature of the colonial/ postcolonial gaze has been written about for decades. The concept of the gaze has also been studied in Feminist studies in terms of the male gaze, where men exercise their superiority and dominance over women by gazing at them. In my discussion, I have taken the male gaze one step further and examined its reciprocal nature in terms of the women gazing back at the men in A Passage to India. This gazing on the part of female characters at male characters is driven not so much by defiance but, rather, by imperialism. The British women are depicted by the third-person narrator, through Forster as the implied author, as using the male gaze against both Indian men and Indian women. In this sense, I hope to have demonstrated how the appropriation of the male gaze transcends gender but not race.

The overall significance of A Passage to India to me is based on the multidimensionality of the novel. The construction of the narrative seems stable in its use of conventional elements such as the third-person narrator, yet seemingly stable elements like this are manipulated to create instability. Traditional norms, both on a cultural level and a

textual level, are presented only to be questioned and problematized again and again. Even the narrator's seemingly affectionate attitude towards Mrs Moore is withdrawn in the description of her death, further emphasizing the instability and problematization that exist throughout the novel.

I hope to have demonstrated that distance and stereotyping function in A Passage to India as more than just textual terms based on form and structure. On the contrary, my emphasis on the link between these two terms, in addition to my presentation of the various kinds of distance in the novel, calls attention to their cumulative effect. The result of this is a message of skepticism and disillusionment but also one of hope and progress. The reader is cautioned by the narrator to expect the worst from the characters in the novel while also being urged to still hope for the best. Rather than labeling A Passage to India as being pessimistic or optimistic, my analysis of distance and stereotyping in the novel—particularly with regard to my discussion of Forster's presentation and subsequent problematization of stereotypes—has led me to the conclusion that the novel's overall message is neither positive nor negative. In this sense, the novel proves to be more than a parabolic story demonstrating right versus wrong. To label A Passage to India as either optimistic or pessimistic would not do justice to the entire message that the novel conveys, which is that where there is good there is also evil and where there is hope there is also disillusionment. Through its complexity the novel comes closer to depicting real life and lends it an air of authenticity. A Passage to India is a nearly one-hundred years old but I hope that I have been able to show that it is surprisingly relevant to critical and theoretical movements on the forefront of modern critical study such as Post-colonialism and Feminism. In addition to being a key text in literary studies, I consider this novel to be relevant to the outside world. Ultimately, the message I gain through my close-reading of A Passage to India is a social one: Until emotional, physical, and social distances separating different groups of people are diminished, power dichotomies

between opposing groups will be fostered, and the reliance upon and perpetuation of stereotypes will continue.

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